THE NATION

SEPTEMBER 20, 1971 50 cents

Back from Vietnam

The Sense of Isolation

Murray Polner

COAL THE KILLER

Paul J. Nyden

Yugoslavia

Experiments with Liberty

Claude Bourdet

DONALD FANGER / TROYAT'S LIFE OF PUSHKIN

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LETTERS

rigged response

Darien, Conn.

DEAR SIRS: Although . . . aware of the lengths to which big business will lobby for its interests, I was shocked to discover recently how a giant industry had sabotaged one of my favorite TV programs, which I'd believed genuine.

I refer to *The Advocates* program which featured the Alaska question. The case against exploitation of that country by the oil companies seemed very adequately argued, and at the close of the program the viewers were urged to send in their "yes" or "no" on a postcard, and were given the solemn reminder that every vote counts and that *results were made known to the White House.*

The result in this case was "yes," for the oil exploitation of Alaska. A little time later, when discussing the art of lobbying at a friend's house, one of the guests asked me if I had watched that program, and as a humorous example described the behind-the-scene activity. A leading oil company had got busy and sent thousands of postcards in batches of hundreds to various offices for the signatures of employees. Then these cards were carefully picked up by those who were managing this rigging. . . . My informant was an executive of the oil company. *H. Taylor*

miniaturization

Roselle, N. J.

DEAR SIRS: Please convey my applause to Barbara Wolf for her superlative essay on Japanese aesthetics ["*Those Longeurs* in Japanese Films," *The Nation,* Aug. 30].

Having sat through Japanese films when our army group was studying the language and, like my fellow students, being stunned into immobility by some of these pictures, it is gratifying to have the obscurity lightened. For the author to compress so much into so little space is a tribute to her gift for miniaturization. . . . *William Miller*

shove to oblivion

Chicago, Ill.

DEAR SIRS: History must surely obliterate the self-styled Nixon "doctrines" as the most ignorant (of basic causes) that ever darkened the White House. . . .

Under the whiplash of polls, the Senate, and the Pentagon Papers, the President is driven to withdraw a few more troops from Vietnam, while his puppets there batten on blood and heroin and he imagines that Chou En-lai will betray *any* of his Communist neighbors to help the My Lai-ers remain in office for four more years. Under the pressures of the Democrats he "suggests" a price-wage freeze, but during sanctimonious Labor Day platitudes fails even to mention the prime cancer—unemployment, especially among the blacks.

God help our country if the Congress doesn't check and direct every one of this dangerous man's moves until his final shove into oblivion next year! *Sidney Blackstone*

Uncle Sam, pusher

San Francisco, Calif.

DEAR SIRS: I served in Vietnam during the first Tet offensive. This was the time when the drug problem was there, but no one knew about it. It was also a time when the war was just as ridiculous as it is now, but few people gave it a second thought.

I could never find anything good in war, but World War II did serve its purpose. . . . The Vietnamese War has no purpose. War has gone out of style, and the young men in Vietnam are suffering greatly because of it. . . . No man can live with himself if he feels he has no purpose. This is the reason behind many suicides, and in Vietnam it is the originator of the drug problem.

(Continued on page 245)

EDITORIALS

Paying for Public Education

The cost of public elementary and secondary school education in the United States is enormous—almost $42 billion. It is breaking the backs of millions of small property owners, and providing inferior education to millions of children. The method of financing this hodgepodge of good and bad has been a sore spot in the economy for decades. Endless debate has resulted in no action, or the wrong kind of action. But now it looks as though something rational may actually be done. That possibility, in itself a relief from the torpor of the past, comes from the California State Supreme Court; whether the promise is fulfilled depends on the U.S. Supreme Court.

By a 6-to-1 ruling, the California high court struck down the state's system of financing public education, which closely resembles the system in practically all the other states. These systems are based largely on local property taxes. A poor district may levy expropriative school taxes and yet be unable to raise enough money to sustain a decent school system. A wealthy district may tax at a low rate and spend lavishly on its schools. In California, residents of Baldwin Park, a suburb of Los Angeles, have been paying a school tax of $5.48 per $100 of property valuation, while Beverly Hills, on the other side of town, pays only $2.38 per $100. But Baldwin Park's property valuation is $3,706 per child; in Beverly Hills, it is $50,885 per child. Obviously both the Beverly Hills children and their parents are much better off in every respect than the children and parents of Baldwin Park.

The California court has held that education must be regarded as a "fundamental interest" of society, hence this type of financing violates the U.S. Constitution's equal protection of the law clause. In the majority decision, Justice Raymond L. Sullivan pointed out that under the existing system "the quality of a child's education [is] a function of the wealth of his parents and neighbors. Recognizing, as we must, that the right to an education cannot be conditioned on wealth, we can discern no compelling state purpose necessitating the present method of financing. We have concluded, therefore, that such a system cannot withstand constitutional challenge and must fall before the equal protection clause."

What the Burger Court will decide is unpredictable, but it will not be easy to contravene this reasoning—the more so as the evil is nationwide and suits similar to the California action have already been filed in Michigan, New Jersey, Texas and Wisconsin. New York will no doubt follow. Educationally, it is a key state. As in California, local property taxes pay about 50 per cent of the cost of the schools, the state pays about 45 per cent and federal sources account for the remaining 5 per cent. The state funds are weighted in favor of the poorer districts, yet the disparity in spending ranges from about $700 per pupil to $2,000.

If the U.S. Supreme Court sustains the California court, the effects will be far-reaching—and by all indications highly beneficial. Many of the troublesome sequels of the *Brown* decision of 1954 stem not from inherent vice in

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CROSSWORD PUZZLE

The editors regret that Crossword Puzzle #1407, appearing in the issue of September 13, was published with the wrong design. A reprint of this puzzle, with the error corrected, will be sent to readers on request.

the population but from the archaic and unfair method of financing the schools. Many of the parents who oppose bussing and favor neighborhood schools (of which few are left in the suburbs and rural areas in any case) are not opposed to bussing per se. What they are opposed to is sending their kids to substandard schools, and who can blame them? If all the schools were good, much of what now passes for racism would evaporate.

Of course, even if the U.S. Supreme Court upholds the California court's reasoning, it will be a long time before all the schools are able to furnish high-quality education. "I shudder to think of the gyrations we'd have to go through to come up with a new system," one metropolitan school executive complains. Few will commiserate with him. There was much shuddering before Social Security, federal bank deposit insurance, and Medicare became the law of the land. As far as the children are concerned, the prospects are brighter since the California Supreme Court applied equity and wisdom to an intolerable situation.

Vietnam and Ulster

One would think that, viewing the disastrous entanglement of the United States in Indochina, other countries would steer clear of any such situations, at least until we stagger out of our predicament; but England, for one, does not seem inclined to learn from our experience. The Prime Minister of Ireland, John Lynch, and the Prime Minister of England, Edward Heath, discussed the Ulster situation for eleven hours and ended their confabulation in disagreement as total as when they began.

Mr. Lynch's stand is simple. Ireland, he says, is "one country, one nation, one people. . . . We have been one for centuries and only divided in the last fifty years." Put more bluntly, Britain oppressed Ireland in toto for centuries, then had to settle for oppression of a Catholic minority in Northern Ireland by a Protestant majority supported by British bayonets.

Like other Irish governmental leaders before him, Mr. Lynch is no extremist. He assured Heath that the Irish Government was taking all possible legal steps to deal with the Irish Republican Army. He felt he had a right, however, to participate in four-way talks, the other parties being the British and Northern Ireland Governments, and representatives of the largely Catholic Northern Ireland opposition. This Mr. Heath would not grant. If anything, he showed even greater obstinacy than have Henry Cabot Lodge, Ellsworth Bunker, David Bruce, and other touted diplomats who have represented the United States in negotiations with the North Vietnamese and the NLF.

Despite such examples as Vietnam, Korea, Germany, China and Ireland, it looks as though, once a superior power has decreed the dismemberment of a country it

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The Nation is published weekly (except biweekly in July and August) by the Nation Company and copyright 1971 in the U.S.A. by the Nation Associates, Inc., 333 Sixth Avenue, New York, N. Y. 10014. Tel: CH 2-8400. Second class postage paid at New York, N. Y.

Subscription Price: One year $12.50; two years, $23. Add $1 per year postage for Canada and Mexico; $2 other foreign.

Change of Address: It is essential that subscribers ordering a change of address give five weeks' notice and provide their old as well as their new address. Please give Zip Code numbers for both addresses.

Manuscripts. All work submitted will be read by the editors. The magazine cannot, however, be responsible for the return of unsolicited manuscripts unless they are accompanied by stamped, self-addressed envelopes.

Information to Libraries: The Nation is indexed in Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature, Book Review Digest, Book Review Index and the Public Affairs Information Service.

THE NATION

Volume 213
No. 8

The Sherrod Library
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Johnson City, Tennessee

SEP 28 '71

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will resist to the end any attempt to heal the unnatural cleavage. It almost seems as if nothing but stabilizing drugs, as proposed by Prof. Kenneth Clark, will avail to curb the aggressiveness of rulers. The analogy with psychiatric institutions is obvious.

The Churches and the Noose

Two well-known Chicago lawyers, Elmer Gertz and Willard J. Lassers, have filed a brief in the October term of the Supreme Court of the United States on the issue of the death penalty as cruel and unusual punishment. The brief is in the form *amici curiae,* and the *amici* in this case comprise fourteen religious organizations and individuals, ranging from the National Coalition of American Nuns, with some 2,000 members, to the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America, a federation of denominations with an aggregate membership of approximately 42 million. Among individuals named are Mrs. Ralph M. Stair, moderator, and William P. Thompson, stated clerk of the general assembly, representing the United Presbyterian Church. Also the Rt. Rev. John E. Hines, presiding bishop of the Episcopal Church. Most of the organizations have long been on record as opposed to capital punishment, but this is apparently the first time that they have made a united appeal to the Supreme Court.

Justice is at best imperfect. Toward the end of the brief the lawyers say, "We can tolerate an imperfect justice if we do not take life, because of the need to protect society. But we cannot tolerate imperfect justice when we inflict an irreversible penalty." This basic fact ties in with the summary of argument at the beginning: "The death penalty is a cruel and unusual punishment because of the inherent fallibility of every judicial proceeding. There is the possibility of the execution of an innocent man." (Instances are cited.) "Every stage and every aspect of the judicial proceedings reveal the wrong we do when we take human life by judicial process: we permit the defendant to plead and bargain with his own life as a counter; we force a scrupled juror to consider a penalty he disavows. . . . The treatment of the condemned man, the setting of death dates and granting of stays all inflict unbearable torture. The execution itself is ghastly."

These last statements go to the heart of the matter. The death penalty degrades and brutalizes society: "It is not alone the condemned man who suffers a cruel and unusual punishment; it is we as well, we in society, who inflict a cruel and unusual punishment on ourselves." On the basis of the Lassers-Gertz brief and the view of the religious groups they represent, the Supreme Court can, and should, outlaw the death penalty.

Suing to Stop the War

Another interesting legal development is a multiplicity of suits brought by the National Emergency Civil Liberties Committee, naming President Nixon and Secretary of Defense Laird as defendants and seeking a permanent injunction against further appropriations for the war in Indochina. Victor Rabinowitz, acting general counsel for the committee, has filed the identical action in the name of anti-war groups in at least ten of the federal district courts across the country, and may file in all twelve. William Meyers is the attorney coordinating the suits. These actions are a consequence of the publication of the Pentagon Papers. The legal basis is that the facts concerning the inception and prosecution of the war have only now been publicly revealed, and prove concealment and misrepresentation on the part of the government. Had the facts been known, the Congress might never have appropriated the billions of dollars required for the prosecution of the war. In the light of the revelations, further disbursements by the Administration are contended to be illegal.

Another area of challenge alleges violation of the U.N. Charter guaranteeing nations the right of self-determination. The primary contention, however, rests on the disclosures of the Pentagon Papers and, if it does nothing else, will serve to remind the public of the fraud and deceit which have marked the prosecution of the war from beginning to end, on the part of both the successive Vietnamese governments and the United States, which has been the prime mover since it took over the war.

In each judicial district the NECLC action is brought in the name of individual plaintiffs representing "Middle American" sentiment. In Cleveland, for instance, the plaintiffs include a medical student, a restaurant operator, the owner of a roofing company, a therapist and a psychiatric aide. Also two lawyers, a taxi driver who is the son of a judge, the president of the Akron City Council and an Akron manufacturer. One of the lawyers practices in Kent; the other plaintiffs are residents of Akron.

Newspaper publicity generally has been sympathetic. The New York *Daily News* (August 25), which has supported the war, was no exception, and included a picture of Attorney Rabinowitz by one of its own photographers. The story ended with a quote from Attorney Meyers: "We are saying that the federal judiciary has to take a role in ending the war." Much of this would hardly have been conceivable before Ellsberg exploded his bombshell.

Sad Year for Old Men

The question of where college students shall be entitled to vote [see "Home Is Where the Vote Is" by Richard G. Singer, *The Nation,* September 13] will continue to agitate the country in the months ahead, not because it is an issue of substance (students should vote where they reside and, for four years or more, they reside at their schools), but because it is an issue of politics.

Attorney General Mitchell made that brilliantly clear on September 1, when he discussed the subject at a meeting of the National Association of Secretaries of State. Saying that it would be improper for the Department of Justice to comment on residency requirements until legislation is forthcoming from Congress, Mr. Mitchell immediately commented that to allow students to vote from their college addresses would be unfair to servicemen overseas. Since servicemen scarcely choose their place of residence, the analogy seems imperfect, but no doubt the Attorney General felt it would have popular appeal. Republican spokesmen dutifully lined up behind him; Democratic leaders expressed dismay.

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The fact is that Mr. Nixon and his entourage fear the young, and particularly the college young. And it must be said that, of all the fears they entertain, or profess to entertain, this one is by far the most rational. Nor will their alarm abate as November approaches: the high courts of Michigan and California have already ruled that students may vote in their college towns, and others will almost certainly follow suit. Mr. Nixon is off soon to gaze upon the Emperor of Japan. He could more pertinently visit Old Siwash, but the hospitality there is more problematical.

Teaching Him a Lesson

Herewith another tale of violence—this time, violence in the courtroom. Tom Reber, a high-school graduate of Yakima, Wash., is a somewhat dreamy, somewhat romantic young man, or so one would judge from the article about him by Mary Jean Lord in the *Intermountain Observer*. Last spring, he acquired a 1955 Chevrolet van, and fitted it out as a house on wheels, determining to take to the road and see America. He needed a curtain for the rear window, and a friend gave him a worn American flag, which Tom cut in half and secured to a rod for the purpose.

Now that is called defacing the flag, and it is against the law. Young Reber did not know about this law, but ignorance is, of course, no excuse. A policeman spotted the offensively curtained van in a Yakima parking lot, and soon thereafter Tom found himself in court. He received the full legal treatment, with a defense lawyer hired by his parents, a prosecutor who kept fondling the mutilated national banner, as though to heal its wounds, and a jury of his "peers," half of whom were in their 70s. Tom said that he loved his country, that he didn't have this feeling of awe about the Stars and Stripes, that he was sorry he had committed an offense. A lot of good that did him. Out went the jury and back they came with a verdict of guilty—gross misdemeanor, punishable with a fine of not more than $1,000 and a prison sentence of not more than one year. All Tom Reber saw of America this summer was justice in action.

Men and women who will do a thing like that to a kid must be convinced that the country is about to founder. Let them keep to their way of acting a bit longer and founder it will.

Confusion on Amchitka

The Atomic Energy Commission has scheduled, despite a barrage of protests, a 5-megaton underground explosion on the island of Amchitka in the Aleutian chain. Among the protesters are a Canadian group who plan to sail a fishing vessel, the *Greenpeace*, to deter the AEC from carrying out its plan. The present intention of the *Greenpeace* crew of sixteen is to anchor outside the 3-mile territorial limit and await developments. The AEC has designated a 50-mile radius from ground-zero on Amchitka as a danger area. AEC spokesmen, with deplorable lack of consistency, have stated: (*1*) "I've never known the AEC to detonate a device that could conceivably create a hazard to people or property," and (2) "If there is a ship in the area and the wind is blowing that way, it could delay the blast." Thus, no one seems to be entirely reassured. Five megatons, even far underground, is an awesome amount of explosive.

The AEC is engaged in another controversy, this one with the Aleutian National Wildlife Refuge of the Interior Department. If the entire matter were not so serious, this would be good for a laugh. AEC personnel have been roaming Amchitka since 1964—they conducted a 1.2-megaton test in 1969—and Robert D. Jones, the Refuge manager, says that the AEC presence has interfered with the use of the island by ducks, Canada geese, and the Asiatic whooper swan—this after Interior had gone to the trouble of removing the fox population, which had been introduced in the 1920s by Aleut natives for commercial purposes. Jones and the AEC information officer, Dixon Stewart, whose headquarters is in Anchorage, differ on the effects of AEC operations on the birds, although Stewart concedes that the presence of a 700-man pretest AEC work force must have some effect.

The Defense Department holds that the 5-megaton test is essential to the development of the Spartan ABM system. However, Mr. Nixon scrapped Spartan in favor of Safeguard, and, as Dr. Jeremy J. Stone, director of the Federation of American Scientists, has told Congressional hearings, the latter ABM system does not employ the type of missile whose warhead the AEC so yearns to test. That would make the Amchitka venture not only possibly dangerous but certainly idiotic. White House sources are not discouraging speculation that the President may cancel or postpone the test when he is in Alaska exchanging compliments with the Emperor Hirohito. It is the kind of gesture that appeals to him—one that costs nothing and wins headlines—so sanity may come to pass.

Eaton on Nixon

Sir William Osler, the great Canadian physician, is remembered chiefly not for his contributions to medicine but for a remark he supposedly made to the effect that people aren't much good for anything after 65 and the world could get on very well without them. He would certainly have made an exception for Cyrus Eaton, likewise Canadian-born, who will be 88 this year. Writing in the August 31st *New York Times* on "The President as Dictator," the Cleveland industrialist says with his usual force and candor what a great many Americans have been thinking, but hesitated to put into unequivocal words. "In effect," Mr. Eaton declares, "we have a Presidential dictatorship sustained by the greatest propaganda machine in history: nationwide prime-time television. The President ignores Congress, rarely consults his Cabinet, bypasses the United Nations and announces his decisions over the air to the unsophisticated." The contrast between this type of government by mass persuasion, which displaces soap and laxative advertisements whenever the Chief Executive asks for the time, and the sober and responsible parliamentary procedures of democracies like Britain and Canada, is highlighted by the fact that the other media, with few exceptions, slavishly follow the Presidential lead.

Mr. Eaton is a master of plain-spoken prose, one of the

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rarest forms of eloquence. In this nuclear age, when one man's fanaticism could end the human race, he accuses the President of carrying on illegal wars with the aid of thousands of spies operating in all nations. "Three Wall Street lawyers, Nixon, Mitchell and Rogers," he writes, "are spending the taxpayers' money around the world like drunken sailors." After castigating Mr. Nixon's so-called New Economic Policy, he assays the President's intellectual capacity by his intimate association with the Rev. Billy Graham. As for the Vietnamese War, Mr. Eaton has been talking with Premier Pham Van Dong of North Vietnam, who assured him that the war would never end as long as Mr. Nixon occupied the White House. "The war will end," Pham Van Dong said, "only when Congress refuses to provide the money for further participation." For his part Mr. Eaton urges this responsibility on the Congress; it is high time the legislators heeded his advice.

BACK FROM VIETNAM

THE SENSE OF ISOLATION

MURRAY POLNER
Mr. Polner is executive assistant to the chancellor of the New York City public schools. He is the author of No Victory Parades: The Return of the Vietnam Veteran *(Holt, Rinehart & Winston), and of the forthcoming* When Can I Come Home: A Debate on Amnesty, *to be published by Doubleday in an Anchor edition.*

Donald Johnson, administrator of the Veterans Administration, when addressing the Vietnam Era Veteran Seminar last May in Houston, passed judgment on how the veteran of this war is faring. "If the present G.I. Bill and training program is any criterion, then we can positively assert that our Vietnam era veterans are readjusting to civilian life and give every indication that they will ultimately make the most successful transition from military to civil life of any veterans' group in history."

This estimate, at best hopeful and certainly speculative, was echoed by a VA counselor in upstate New York. "Don't judge the mass by a few bad specimens," he said. "Most of the guys are married, or back to school or work. They've done their job and now they want to get on with their lives."

And so they do, many of them. They are working and studying. More than 3,000 are now in the New York City police force. As of December 31, 1970, according to the VA, 3,115,000 out of a total labor force of 3,383,000 Vietnam period veterans were employed. From June 1966 through the end of June 1970, more than 1,859,000 veterans and active-duty servicemen had taken advantage of the GI Bill's educational benefits—almost one in four, says the VA's 1970 *Annual Report.* And the VA expects that, as happened after World War II, "one of two veterans currently returning from service eventually will take training under the current program." VA statistics also show that 10,000 black veterans are enrolled in the nation's 105 black colleges; many more are in other schools.

James T. Taaffe, Jr., director of compensation, pension and education for the VA, claims that use of the GI Bill is "climbing like mad." Last fall, Taaffe predicted, "the way our enrollment figures are climbing, it's possible that we may have a spring enrollment in excess of 1 million veteran students."

Nevertheless, the doubts aroused by all this optimism are difficult to put aside. More than half of World War II veterans availed themselves of the schooling opportunities, and about 40 per cent of those from Korea did so. The vets of Vietnam are different. Thus far, the best available estimates are that from one in four to one in five enroll for schooling under the GI Bill. Even more striking, less than 4 per cent of nonwhite veterans have used the bill. James Fenrich, associate professor of sociology at Florida State University, and Michael Pearson, a veteran, studied black veterans of Vietnam in Jacksonville and learned that in 1968 "less than 20 per cent . . . were taking advantage of the GI Bill." They suggest two plausible reasons: "either because of insufficient resources or different priorities, VA and the employment offices were not encouraging black veterans to utilize these benefits," and "it is easy to see how the word could get around that would discourage others from seeking assistance."

For all veterans, a major deterrent is lack of money. "I've got a wife and two kids. How can I afford to go back to school?" asks a white veteran. "World War II vets had everything paid for, texts included, plus $75 monthly expenses. Even Quonset huts for families. But not now."

Under the newly amended law, payments for single veterans are $175 per month; for the veteran with one dependent, $205; with two dependents, $230. And for each additional dependent, an added $13. Rates are scaled down for less than full-time students, but veterans may count noncredit remedial reading courses as part of their study, and those who need special tutoring can even get an extra $50 monthly.

For many, it's still not enough. "Take a Long Island boy who wants to go to Hofstra," says Jack Kluger, director of the Veterans Service Agency in Nassau County. "Even if he lives at home, tuition and books cost more than $1,800 a year."

But in the end there may be reasons other than money. Dr. Richard Trent, president of the City University's newest college, Medgar Evers, says that black vets have it worse, for they "come from communities that did not adequately prepare them educationally for life in the first place." Another guess is that a minority of veterans simply distrust the hand that is offering to feed

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them. A study made by the Office of Management and Budget of disadvantaged veterans, black and white, mentioned that 5 to 8 per cent of the blacks shy away from officialdom, fearing, among other things, more discrimination. Anti-war veterans are equally unresponsive; they trust only their own.

These disaffected men may perhaps be dismissed as only a handful, yet an American Legion official who has worked with the new veterans thinks it astonishing that, in his area at least, perhaps as many as a third of them do not avail themselves of the GI Bill. VA officials, seeking an explanation, say that the veterans of this war are younger, often less prepared for higher education than those who returned after other wars. Almost one in five never graduated from high school. One official complained privately: "Some of them don't seem to give a damn. They think they're the only ones who ever had to go off to fight for their country. About 5 per cent, I'd guess, are malcontents. The rest I should say, are doing fine."

In 1969, many of them were indeed doing fine. Millions returned to the workaday worlds from which they had been plucked. The Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that of the 4.6 million white workers between 20 to 24 years of age in 1969, almost 30 per cent were Vietnam veterans. But that was 1969. Now the jobless rate is climbing. In 1969, the rate of unemployment for 20-to-29-year-old veterans was 6.8 per cent, in contrast to 3.3 per cent for their peers who never served. The next year it soared to 7.9 per cent and 4.8 per cent and Secretary of Labor Hodgson referred recently to the 10.8 per cent of veterans who cannot find jobs, as compared to 8.4 per cent nonveterans in the same age group. Blacks, Puerto Ricans and Chicanos, of course, suffer the most. One estimate for unemployed black veterans is double the figure for whites. Taken as a whole, Hodgson noted, 816,000 new veterans had been absorbed by the job market, 370,000 were unemployed, and up to 1 million more GIs expected to return home this year.

The national chairman of the President's Jobs for Veterans campaign, James F. Oates, Jr., is worried. Jobs, he has said, will be "mighty hard" to find. "Bitterness will surely follow. . . ." It used to be "patriotic to hire a veteran" and a widely advertised White House campaign has worked that theme, but not many companies go out of their way to respond. In Baltimore for example, of twenty-eight corporations recently surveyed by the federal government, only two replied that they made any efforts to attract veterans.

"I don't know how to explain this," says a veterans' employment representative of the State Employment Service. "It's been difficult for everyone to get a job, plus the fear of drugs and diseases picked up in Asia."

"Our society feels as though the GI has a free ticket," says a black former army radio repairman who was looking for work at a State Employment Service office in Manhattan. "But it isn't so." A union would not take him on as an apprentice. He shrugged. "It's who knows who, not black power or white power. Only green power counts in this country."

The Veterans Administration remains optimistic. "These Vietnam fellows seem no different from other veterans or from other young people their age," says Dr. Charles Stenger, chairman of the VA's Vietnam Era Veteran Committee. "Some of them are alienated, but what 20-to-24-year-old isn't? Some are mixed up about what they want to do, but what young person isn't? Some don't like the war, but what's new about that?"

The established veteran organizations feel the same way, and are recruiting new veterans as intensively as possible. Lloyd Wignall, the American Legion's director of membership, reported last October that 300,000 veterans of Vietnam are on its rolls. By 1972-73, he forecast, they would comprise one-third of the Legion's membership. He also reported that new veterans have been elected post commanders in four small Nebraska towns. In Quincy, Ill., one recent ex-GI is vice-commander. Four of the ten officers of VFW Memorial Post 2562 in Wheaton, Md., are from Vietnam. Julian Dickenson, adjutant general of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, claims that new veterans make up 12 to 14 per cent of its membership. And the AMVETS, which, like the other two organizations, has done its most successful recruiting in the Ohio River Valley and mid-America, from Texas to the Canadian border, has enrolled 45,000 since 1968.

Compared to the 12,000 membership claimed by Vietnam Veterans Against the War, and the handful enrolled by the new, pro-Nixon Vietnam Veterans for a Just Peace, the figures given out by the old-line veteran groups suggest that they offer some things that half a million or so new veterans find attractive. "I can't stand the older guys sitting around swapping war stories or trading dirty jokes, but at least we've all been to war and it gives me some sense of fellowship," says a veteran from New Jersey. "Anyway, I thought we did the right thing in Nam and these guys don't bother me about it."

Arthur Egendorf, a Harvard graduate who served in Army Intelligence in Saigon, has been developing his own thesis as to who is making it and who isn't. In the past, this nation's ex-soldiers were of two basic types: those who came home, acquiesced in the social order and became absorbed in work and family; and a second, smaller group of the psychologically wounded, who required special attention. But this war, believes Egendorf, has produced a third group, "a significant and ever increasing minority" possessed of a "deep conviction that it is not *they*, but rather the society that sent them to war, that is in need of treatment."

Among the few researchers who have started to think seriously about the men home from Vietnam there is nearly unanimous agreement that, despite the many who seem to be adjusting easily, a surprisingly large number are not. Unsettling reports have started to pour into the VA's Washington headquarters. Just a year ago, its Chief Medical Director sent a letter out to VA personnel throughout the nation, asking for their descriptions of the new veterans. Following are excerpts from some of the replies:

> Three out of every five young veterans interviewed . . . were embittered, unsettled, generally distrustful.
>
> VN combat veterans tend to see their experience as an exercise in survival rather than a defense of national values.
>
> The Vietnam war experience . . . has an especially

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brutalizing effect on many of the young, immature Vietnam veterans.

Admittedly only a sample, these comments are nonetheless drawn from people who have observed directly tens of thousands of veterans, many of whom are by no means "sick." But of the untold number of veterans who may bear scars of disaffection and alienation, there is not a word from official sources.

The VA, however, now offers its own "Profile of Today's Veteran," a composite that confirms the belief that strange things are happening, not only to anti-war veterans but to an astonishing number of the roughly millions of returnees from Vietnam. The VA has discovered five crucial characteristics:

> (*1*) He is less willing [than earlier veterans] to accept authority in a compliant manner and quite willing to question and even to challenge it.
>
> (*2*) He expects that authority, whatever its form, will *not* be responsive to his intense need to be treated as an individual with a right to a voice in things that affect him.
>
> (*3*) He typically shares with young people in general a sense of uncertainty and lack of optimism about life.
>
> (*4*) In striking contrast to uncertainties about adult society and institutions, the young veteran characteristically feels an intense, positive identification with his own group.
>
> (*5*) Young veterans typically exercise less control over emotions and feelings. . . . Other veterans by contrast, characteristically attempt to suppress feelings and tolerate delays. The difference is documented by a trend to "acting out" type of behavior. The increased incidence of suicidal attempts is one example of the serious form this can and does take.

Over a three-year period I interviewed more than 200 Vietnam veterans for a book I was writing. I first met these sons of the working and lower middle classes in early 1967 when I was teaching in a community college, about 60 miles from New York City. They had been ordinary, apolitical kids before they went in and were divided into hawks, doves and the haunted after they came home.

One morning after class, a student, about 21, dark-haired, clean-shaven, dressed conventionally, came up to my desk. Tight-lipped, he expressed strenuous objections to something said in class about the war. How did the speaker know? After all, he had been there and we hadn't.

That was in September 1967. We talked, at first in that classroom, then in my office, later in the college cafeteria and off-campus. I was struck by his anger, his intensity, his bewilderment. He was of Italian parentage, the only one of a large family ever to go beyond high school. His many older brothers had all served in the military and supported America's role in Vietnam. Only three months away from fire fights and sweep-and-destroy missions in the Central Highlands, and with a bullet scar in his neck, he was unable to understand a world he had left in 1965.

These conversations soon involved other veterans and went far deeper than the usual academic debate between hawks and doves. Since I was learning so much from them, the social historian in me was soon taking notes, recording interviews from memory or on tape, while they were still fresh in my mind. Before I was finished I had interviewed 204 veterans and my research had taken me far beyond the limits of that small college, coming to include men from every part of the country, their families and friends, military psychiatrists and chaplains who had been in Southeast Asia.

All of the GIs had chosen to join up, by either enlisting or passively accepting the draft. All in their pre-service lives had expressed vague longings and some dissatisfaction, but all were prepared to live out those lives had Vietnam not come along. They also appeared to me to confirm Edgar Z. Friedenberg's cynical remark, "All weakness tends to corrupt and impotence corrupts absolutely." Indifferent if not hostile to trends among their rebellious peers before they went to war, many of them had originally identified, as Friedenberg has written in another context, "with the more powerful and frustrating of the forces that impinge upon them [accepting the *status quo*] as the way life is, and closed their minds against the anxiety of perceiving alternatives." Until Vietnam.

Nearly 4 million men who served in the armed forces during the Vietnam era are back in civilian life. Naturally, similarities can be found, but the veterans vary, from those who served between 1965 and 1968 to those who came later; from those who fought to those who were stationed on aircraft carriers or in Danang or Saigon; from blacks and Chicanos and Puerto Ricans to white troopers; from the sons of the lower classes to the more privileged who more often than not were able to avoid sacrifice or draft-dodge in the Reserves or National Guard; from those who have by now adjusted to those who are haunted.

"My mother doesn't believe me. My wife doesn't be-

Liederman, Long Island Press

Re-entry Problem

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lieve me. My friends who survived with me and came home disturb me. They are insane." Or so says an Ohio veteran, one-time combat medic who has never been a VA patient.

Another ex-soldier, named Ted, is living in Baltimore, working for an anti-poverty agency. It's hard to get him to talk about his postwar attitudes, but he *seems* to be a microcosm of the black veteran. It was for him a racist war, white against nonwhite. He is unyielding in this belief, far beyond debate or leisurely discussion. Black grunts were cannon fodder, as were white trash. How come, he asked me, America always manages to stage its massacres against colored races? Moros and Filipinos, Indians, Japanese, Vietnamese, his own people? And Dresden? I remind him. Hamburg? Mistakes, he shouts at me. Whites wanted to kill Japanese, not Germans or Italians. "Man," he says to me, without humor or passion, "me and the brothers just ain't going to fight *their* wars ever again. Only our wars. I really mean it this time."

Many veterans are stunned by the indifference of the stay-at-homes. One veteran tried to describe his feelings: he was, he said, a stone gargoyle perched high on a wall, distant, remote, suspicious and afraid. In one VA publication two civilians, well-dressed and very square, are shown talking about a veteran who stands before them, beret on his head and duffel bag in hand.

"Vietnam vet," says one civilian pointing.

Answers the other, "So wot?"

For years, combat soldiers in Vietnam bitterly resented anti-war criticism at home. So intense was the feeling that an apocryphal story swept Vietnam. Returnees would say they had read about it in *Stars and Stripes,* or had heard of it from their buddies who knew someone who had seen it or had learned of it from their platoon leader. A veteran—or so the tale went—landed at Travis Air Force Base in California and was approached by a hippie.

"You a Vietnam vet?" the hippie asked. Then he whipped out an automatic and shot the veteran dead.

"It was our sense of isolation, of fighting a shitty war that no one cared about that probably set it off," said a former sergeant, a three-year enlistee. "I even know of guys who said they weren't going home without their own weapons. A few even dreamed of going back to Berkeley and gunning down the bastards in revenge."

New stories now get told among angry, especially anti-war veterans. A Minnesota American Legion post is alleged to have refused veterans of Vietnam the use of its social hall because "they lost the war." A Texan in a 10-gallon hat supposedly walks up to a returning veteran at an airport and asks him if he has just arrived from Vietnam. He then spits into the GI's face. A prospective employer turns down a vet because he believes them all to be heroin addicts.

Disadvantaged veterans are yet another kind of subgrouping. The Office of Management and Budget, which studied 2,000 of them, has suggested that they were in danger of becoming tomorrow's poor. "Under-educated, ill trained, hitherto unemployed or under-employed," not yet as desperately poor and overwhelmed as the families they left behind, they are somewhat distinct from their ex-buddies.

Nearly two-thirds of the 1,069 blacks and 931 whites studied were 23 to 24 years old. Usually married, the blacks tended to have larger families. Almost 25 per cent of them had enlisted and now 20 per cent were toying with the notion of re-enlisting: one in three blacks from nonurban areas was seriously considering going back into service. Between 51 and 59 per cent of these veterans had finished high school; in nonurban areas more blacks had graduated (68 per cent) than whites (57 per cent). Naturally, jobs were hard to get, especially for blacks. The Jacksonville study found 13 per cent jobless and 51 per cent in semi-skilled or unskilled work. Their median income was less than $100 a week.

Gilbert Pew was married and had a 4-month-old child when he was classified 1-A. With the esoteric world of draft counseling closed to him, he was drafted and served as a grunt. He remembers combat and hospitalization at Long Binh (the colonel awarded him a medal and he tossed it back at the colonel in disgust). He remembers a kidney disease the VA refuses to take credit for and which has caused him to spend, by his own recollection, 60 per cent of his time in VA hospitals. Since his return home to Brownsville in Brooklyn, Pew has been fighting off the junkies and trying to get a decent job and attend college, so far without success. He and his friends don't trust the VA or the State Employment Service. One VA counselor did try to get him into a special Fordham University program, but when Pew, who had passed through New York's vocational high schools and emerged with no special skills, went back to see her, a federal economy wave had left the counselor herself without a job.

Out of all this there may be emerging a "new" and equally average veteran, different indeed from all the rest, a still small but growing minority who have what some are now calling PVS, the Post-Vietnam Syndrome. Hardly a clear diagnostic category, PVS is rather a malaise that embraces intangibles undetected in past conflicts: moral corruption, alienation, guilt; having been compelled to be both "victim and executioner"; having been made to serve in a class war for no discernible reason, by a nation that cared little for them; being held morally responsible in an amoral whirlwind.

Was the war a "cruel hoax, an American tragedy, that left a small minority of young American males holding the bag?" asks former Capt. Max Cleland, 27, a native Georgian who lost both arms and his right leg at Khe Sanh. From Qui Nhon another army captain writes to *The New York Times* of January 4: "We are . . . being physically and morally corrupted." A young Marine tells me: "Any other war would have been worth my foot, but not this one."

Back in 1967-68 I circulated a questionnaire to 140 anti-war veterans, all of them the nucleus of Vietnam Veterans Against the War. Their responses showed that most of them had been uninterested in politics before service. They had grown up in a large city, finished high school, been drafted. Half of them came from conservative or far-Right families. They and their families thought the war justifiable—*before* they went to Vietnam. Confused, angry, betrayed, these veterans may find it hard to forgive those who sent them to war, those who endorsed the escalation at every stage.

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Capt. Jordan Phelps (a pseudonym) was a division psychiatrist for almost nine months with the first Cavalry until sent to the Seventeenth Field Hospital in Saigon. He left Vietnam in 1967, but has said that for the next three years, "I couldn't conceptualize the thing. I couldn't put it together." Then in March 1970 "I heard Bronson Clark of the Quakers speak at a local university; I read a colleague's critical account of the war's effect on men; I received a request from a group of anti-war veterans for permission to use my name in one of their ads."

Phelps is still haunted by what he has seen. "I had seen a culture completely foreign to us, one that had been squabbling among themselves for centuries, destroyed: how we had no business there. I listen to the radio and TV and hear that 100 or so men were killed during the week. I feel the impact. The bodies are very, very real for me. But now finally I can watch TV: I've stopped reading the war-dead lists. Nobody at home feels it anyway. The dead kids are just a number, a name, a picture. And now that I've started to adjust, I wonder: have I betrayed the kids? I'm mad. And I'm guilty. Both. And if it can happen to me, a psychiatrist, what can I say about the kids who come home? How will they cope with their confusion and resentment?"

How will these veterans synthesize their experiences? What impact will that have on the rest of us? Is it possible that the young Americans who answered their country's call might very well be transformed one day into a large, disillusioned and estranged minority? Nobody has any answers yet.

I ask everyone who has dealt with the veterans about their potential for violence. All wave me away. No one knows the long-term psychic effects the war may have had on them. Meanwhile, the overwhelming majority are making it. Perhaps 80 per cent of the 4 million veterans are getting by nicely, fathering children, studying or working. Sleeping well. Silent.

But I have talked with some of the others and cannot forget those whom I came to know well. Memories of Peter, crying desperately in his small living room because someone had reminded him of his best friend, blown to bits by rocket fire five months earlier; of Nick, a one-time Green Beret, who has run off to a commune somewhere in Arizona or New Mexico. Memories of all the young men I once met who would never have left Bangor, or Worcester, or their small Midwestern towns had Vietnam not come along.

I remember a former Marine, a young and sincere admirer of Vietnamization who organized a group for a "Just Peace," yet has charged publicly that some 300,000 of his post-escalation buddies are in trouble. Another, Anthony M. McDonald, Jr., 27, a combat veteran, director of foreign affairs for the VFW, son of a blue-collar family in Brooklyn's Red Hook, told a syndicated columnist how much he disagrees with John Kerry and his "unrepresentative" veterans. And yet, he is not free of contradiction. "The real majority of veterans," he says, "are young, confused and disillusioned."

Finally I remember another veteran, a combat medic, atypical perhaps (or is he?), who said to me: "I am just a bit mad. But I understand the world better than sane men. The bread comes to the teeth and then to the stomach and finally to the bowels. Does even one of you understand?" □

YUGOSLAVIA

EXPERIMENTS WITH LIBERTY

CLAUDE BOURDET
Mr. Bourdet is The Nation*'s Paris correspondent.*

Belgrade

Returning to Yugoslavia after a few years' absence is always an experience. Everything changes so quickly in this country of many experiments that each new visit brings a new surprise. In every field, the country innovates, experiments, makes huge blunders, starts all over again—and everything is constantly discussed. Yugoslavia is far from being a textbook example of socialism. Pragmatism is the rule, but it is the pragmatism of research. Failures are numerous—but they bear fruit. Above all, the country lives intensely.

Three years ago, I was already struck by the rate of building and the number of private cars. This time, I had the same impression—multiplied several times. "New Belgrade," the new city, is one immense construction site. In all the neighborhoods of the old city, too, apartment buildings rise. Zagreb gives the same impression. There is in general a sense of harmony; many flowers are at the windows. The quality of the new construction, according to the inhabitants, is medium to mediocre (much use of prefabricated materials); rents are low by comparison with Western prices, but higher than in the other Eastern countries. As in all big cities, the construction of new lodgings, rapid though it may be, does not keep pace with population growth and the arrival of workers from rural areas. The crisis is severe, but the practice of two or more families sharing an apartment, still common in the USSR, has almost disappeared.

The spectacle of the street, especially in the afternoon at the end of the working day (from 7 A.M. to 3 P.M., without a break) is astonishing. Belgrade and Zagreb have as many traffic jams as does New York. Sidewalks are covered with parked cars. There are 160,000 cars in Belgrade for a population of about 1.2 million; in Zagreb, the proportion is even higher. As there is no subway (one will be constructed in Belgrade, probably from French plans) and since the busses are insufficient, there are objective reasons for the multiplication of cars, and, as in Western cities, the organ is destroying the function.

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These cars are of all sorts and from everywhere: domestic brands (the Zastava, a Yugoslavian Fiat constructed under contract) and foreign ones. All the Western brands are represented, as well as Japanese, Czechoslovakian and East German imports. The Western cars are more popular because of their higher quality.

The car seems to be, as in the West (and as in the dreams of the Soviet population) a status symbol as much as a utilitarian instrument. Badly housed, ill-fed families deprive themselves of food and better lodgings to buy a car. But a large number of the new owners can well afford their cars. These include the executives of big enterprises, but especially they include the new middle class.

The phenomenon is not peculiar to Yugoslavia. Nine years ago in Budapest, a leader of the Hungarian Communist Party told me: "If I take my car to be repaired in a state shop, it will be cheap; but if I want the work to be more or less well done, I'll have to add a large unofficial tip for the mechanic. All in all, the job will be more expensive and less well done than if I take it to a private mechanic. Moral of the story: I, a Communist leader, who cannot afford to be without a car in good running condition, enrich the artisan."

The same thing is happening in Yugoslavia, but on a larger scale. The factories and the cooperative stores, submitted to workers' control and self-management, are more efficient than the large bureaucratic firms of the other Socialist countries, but nevertheless the customer does not find the same quality of service he can expect in the small, privately owned store or in the shop of an artisan. Therefore, these latter categories are growing. A few weeks ago, in Belgrade, a small neighborhood hairdresser was giving his daughter in marriage. He rented a motel and provided a meal for 140 persons. The cost, so the neighbors estimated, was 20,000 new dinars, or about $1,275.

But isn't such affluence inevitable? Many years ago, when the economists of the Soviet "Gosplan" re-established contact with the French, they told the French state economists, "If you ever adopt socialism in France, don't make the mistake of destroying your artisanry; the Soviet economy will never completely recover from this mistake." The encouragement given artisanry and small business by the reform of 1965 was particularly useful in Yugoslavia. To make the economy competitive, a condition necessary to self-management and to competition among enterprises, it was necessary to eliminate overemployment (or "hidden unemployment"), the stumbling block of all other Socialist economies. (Western workers installing factories in the Soviet Union are always astonished by the number of uselessly employed or idle workers in each enterprise.) The same situation existed of course in Yugoslavia, but the development of small family enterprises, which are allowed, in addition to family members, three outside employees, has permitted the productive employment of many workers. It would be difficult, if not impossible, to return to the old system.

This development has not and cannot lead to the re-establishment of large-scale capitalism any more than the private agricultural system, based on the small property of not more than 25 acres, can permit the re-establishment of rural capitalism. The danger is not political but financial and social. This vast and growing middle class (artisans, small businessmen, executives, small property owners who construct houses and apartments and rent them at high prices) exerts a continual pressure on the market. It wishes to consume, and it wants products of good quality. This has a useful effect on Yugoslavian production, but it also raises the import level. From one year to the next, imports went up more than 10 per cent, and exports diminished by 2 per cent. Unfortunately, a large part of the import flow cannot be eliminated: two-thirds, roughly, is comprised of machines, raw materials, half-finished products indispensable to industry, as well as foodstuffs which Yugoslavian agriculture furnishes in insufficient quantity because very low agricultural prices do not encourage the farmer. (This is to be corrected soon.)

Galloping inflation, a lack of equilibrium in the balance of payments (the devaluation was absorbed almost without profit), favor growth: the annual expansion is 10 per cent. But this "overheating" cannot last forever; expenses must be lowered, the more affluent Yugoslavs must stop living beyond the means of their country. Tito thundered awhile back against the "Mercedes owners," but the latter have paid scant attention to such warnings.

Marshal Tito

The most serious phenomenon, on a short-term basis, is the widening of the gaps between social classes. Again, Yugoslavia is not unique among the Socialist countries. One can say that the members of the high administrative and industrial bureaucracy in the USSR, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, etc., probably live better than their counterparts in Yugoslavia, where simplicity is the rule

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in all that has to do with the state. But the new middle class is proportionately much more numerous, and thus much more visible, in Yugoslavia than elsewhere. The country is completely open; it receives hundreds of thousands of tourists, and more than a million Yugoslavs work outside the country, half of them in West Germany. The rationalization of the economy made it inevitable that they should do so, and they will continue to work abroad as long as their own country fails to create new enterprises, and thus greater employment. In the Republic of Serbia alone, 500,000 more or less redundant hands are still employed in agriculture. They will probably have to emigrate in the next few years.

At least these emigrants, generally temporary, earn good livings in the West; last year, they sent nearly half a billion dollars home to their families. The most distressing situation is that of the workers who make up the vital minimum in Yugoslavia itself. The subsistence level of 600 dinars per month ($36 by current exchange rates, double that or more in buying power) is rare; either there are two workers in a family, or the worker follows a second trade—usually that of handyman—after 3 P.M. But 1,200 to 1,500 dinars for a couple of workers with children is not rare; that represents $150 to $180 in buying power. It's better than the lot of the least privileged class in the other Socialist countries, but the comparison with the life style of the new middle class is cruel. And strikes are more and more frequent.

To these economic and social difficulties one must add the national difficulties; indeed, the two orders cannot be separated. By comparison with old monarchic Yugoslavia, Tito's Federative Republic constituted enormous progress. The autonomy of the Republics is real, their "governments" and "parliaments" are not façades. For a while it seemed that this much independence would suffice, but as the country grew richer, and as the ideology of communal autonomy and self-management developed, local nationalisms reawakened, and so did antagonisms believed dormant. Catholic Croatia, a former Austro-Hungarian possession, more modern and more occidental than Serbia, has considered itself exploited by the Serbs since 1918. It was Ustaci, the Croatian Fascist, who assassinated King Alexander and the French minister Louis Barthou at Marseilles in 1934. During World War II, the Ustaci bands of Ante Pavelic collaborated with the Nazis and massacred thousands of Serbs—with the blessing of the Catholic Bishop Stepinac of Zagreb.

All of this is now history. Josip Broz Tito is himself a Croat, and the League of Communists of Croatia is as solidly implanted in Zagreb as are the other national sections of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia. However, old prejudices have not disappeared. The largest part of the Yugoslav coast, Dalmatia with its countless islands, a paradise for tourists, belongs to the Republic of Croatia as does the great port of Rijeka (Fiume). Half of the Yugoslavs working abroad are Croatian. Even if one counts only the tourist trade and emigrant workers, and does not consider its export industries, Croatia brings in more foreign money than do all the other Republics combined. Croatians find that they do not reap enough of these profits for their own state. They find that Belgrade's "Point Four" in favor of Yugoslavia's underdeveloped areas is carried out largely at Croatian expense. Thus tension has steadily grown in the last few years.

Tito knows that his eventual disappearance from the scene would engender a period of difficulties. He has sought for several years to prepare his retirement, to organize the transition, while supervising things from a distance. But without Tito, the government has been too weak to handle its job. In April, the crisis finally came, in a rather strange fashion. The Ustaci are well organized in Western countries, especially in Germany, Belgium and Sweden; recently they assassinated the Yugoslavian ambassador to Stockholm.

One of their main leaders, Branko Jelic, lives in West Berlin. He is a West German citizen; no one can touch him. At the beginning of this year, he began to boast, in cafés and other public places, of his excellent contacts with Croatian Communist leaders. He even did so (wittingly or not) before an agent of the Yugoslav security services. The head of the Yugoslav military mission in West Berlin reported these utterances to Belgrade—with all necessary reservations. A civil servant in Belgrade had the unfortunate idea of printing it (again with the most extreme reservations) in a confidential bulletin of the Ministry of War.

This caused an explosion in Zagreb. Croatian Communist spokesmen asserted that it was an anti-Croatian plot hatched in Belgrade and demanded the dissolution of the security services; the affair began to take on frightening proportions. It was brought back to more realistic dimensions by the "Plenum" of Brioni, last April 28 to 30, at a meeting in which the leaders of all the national and regional party organizations took part. Tito calmed the storm, but events had forced him to draw some somber conclusions. He seems to have estimated, as did the Western journalists with whom I spoke in this regard, that the Croatian Communists had above all used the pretext of a stupid incident (from all appearances an Ustaci trap into which the security services quite blithely tumbled) to try to destroy *all* centralization in Yugoslavia.

The old leader then had two alternatives: he could use force, and with the aid of the army, which is devoted to him, oblige Croatia to toe the line. But this would have amounted only to a delaying action, and, after Tito's death, the explosion would have occurred. Or he could try to satisfy, as completely as possible, the demands of all the Republics and especially of the Croatians; this

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would involve transforming Yugoslavia from a federal state into a confederation of states, each state to be much more autonomous than those in the U.S. system and even than the cantons of the Helvetic Confederation. Thus by leaving the way completely open for local nationalisms, he would force the individual Republics to stop blaming Belgrade for all their problems. Perhaps the Republics themselves would realize that things had been pushed too far. But if they did, any new centralization would be voluntarily accepted.

It was to this end that the constitutional amendments, now being discussed at all levels in the country, were drafted. They will become effective when they have been approved by Parliament. The only areas to be left to the Confederation are national defense, foreign affairs, the organization of internal commerce, and aid to underdeveloped areas. Everything else will be transferred to the individual Republics. This decentralization poses countless problems: the rule is that each problem will be solved by a compromise between two Republics, or between Belgrade and a Republic, but *never* by force. Thus Zagreb will certainly obtain a larger portion of the foreign money gained by Croatia than it has in the past.

The intricacy of the new edifice becomes evident when one considers that there will be a collective Presidency of the Republic, composed of twenty-two members: three members for each of the six Republics, one or two for each autonomous territory (e.g., one representative for the 500,000 Kossova Albanians). Roughly the same structure will obtain for the federal government, which is to include a similar number of ministers chosen in the same way. The principle will be extended to every aspect of government; for example, in the diplomatic corps, posts of any importance will be distributed, not only according to the diplomat's competence but also with regard to his native Republic.

Will this mechanism diminish resentments and jealousies? Almost certainly. Will it function? All the best-informed observers, Yugoslavian as well as foreign, say: "It's not certain that it will work, but it had to be tried; nothing else was possible." The optimists add, "At any rate, the Yugoslavs always seem to manage." But it is evident that this transformation, coupled with the economic quandary, poses nigh-insoluble problems to any leader. And if Tito should die. . . .

Moreover, foreign affairs must be considered. The USSR, whose relations with Yugoslavia were greatly ameliorated under Khrushchev, is once again hostile, even threatening. The situation grew worse in 1968 with the affair of Czechoslovakia. The existence of Yugoslavia facilitated Romanian dissidence, and even more than Romania, Yugoslavia, a "Socialist laboratory" and a country in full development, is an ideological menace for all the bureaucracies of Eastern Europe.

Then there are strategic considerations. The Middle East crisis and the arrival of a Russian fleet in the Mediterranean make the Soviet general staff acutely aware of the need for a Mediterranean port, controlled by the USSR and linked to Russia by land. It would be so easy to establish such a port on the Yugoslav coast! Finally, the Russians are familiar with the economic and national difficulties of the Yugoslavs. They are convinced that the country will shatter at the death of Tito. Here can be seen a curious convergence with the ideas of the Ustaci Fascists. The aforementioned Branko Jelic wrote to the Soviet ambassador in East Berlin, offering to satisfy Soviet strategic desires in the Mediterranean—on the condition that, for all practical purposes, Croatia be granted independence (allowing it, of course, to link up with the West). To put it briefly, a "Yalta" that would dissect the country. The Russian ambassador apparently dismissed Mr. Jelic's proposal and communicated the contents of his letter to the Yugoslav ambassador in East Berlin. But many people think, all the same, that certain Soviet secret services discreetly finance the Ustaci. What seems even more certain is that throughout the Soviet Union the anti-Yugoslavian campaign has been reinaugurated, that last summer's Warsaw Pact maneuvers will be oriented toward the Yugoslav borders, that the old Bulgarian claims on the Macedonian coast are suddenly audible again, after having been muted by Khrushchev, and that the USSR is creating multiple difficulties in its economic relations with Yugoslavia.

Of course this is not the dramatic situation of 1948-53, when every day brought new fears of invasion. But the pressure in all areas weighs heavily on a country already enmeshed in numerous domestic difficulties. It is not surprising that the Chinese invited a Yugoslav delegation to Peking in early June, and gave it an admirable reception. We have come a long way from the time when Mao, by attacking Tito openly, was implicitly aiming at Khrushchev. The promise of complete support received by the Yugoslavs at Peking is obviously more moral than military, but it facilitates Tito's difficult balancing act between the West, from which he must obtain support without ceding principles, and the USSR, which he must treat guardedly while waiting for better days.

All of these considerations are linked to unpredictable factors. Although the Yugoslavs are tactfully but methodically organizing their national defense on a "Swiss" plan of local preparedness, no one fears Soviet aggression for the moment. But one can well imagine the internal problems that would result if Tito's death coincided with a worsening of the economic crisis, and if at that precise moment the Middle Eastern conflict burst out again. Unfortunately such suppositions are not entirely farfetched! Perhaps the Soviet general staff, believing itself threatened with a major conflict, would feel an urgent need for a Mediterranean port. Can one be sure that Moscow would not present the Yugoslavs (allies of the Egyptians, as are the Russians) with a "friendly" but firm ultimatum? Can one be sure that there are not, in Yugoslavia, men hostile to the present tide of events, who would demand a complete overhaul of national policy? It is often said that Rankovic, former Minister of the Interior, who helped save Yugoslavia from Stalin's intrigues, but is today out of favor, is extremely hostile to the general liberalization Tito promotes. From there to abetting a Russian seizure of territory is a big step; but in times of crisis, big steps are taken.

It is certain in any case that, despite interior rivalries, Yugoslav patriotism is not merely a theoretical entity

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and that all Yugoslavs—Croats and Serbs, Slovenes and Macedonians, Bosnians and Montenegrins—unite as one man at the slightest hint of foreign threat. It was so recently, when the Bulgarian demands on Macedonia reappeared.

It is also true that Yugoslavia is now a country of freedom, of a creative, burgeoning freedom that one finds in the liveliness of the streets, in the nearly exaggerated disappearance of all police (even on the road, where they would certainly be useful!), in artistic creation of every kind, in economic and political invention, the last experiment being those incredible constitutional amendments. If one values liberty, the disappearance of such a laboratory would be a reason for great chagrin. If one believes in liberty, it follows inevitably that one must assume it gives birth to unsuspected resources. For twenty-five years the Yugoslavs have been experimenting with a constantly increasing and constantly productive liberty; it seems probable that this liberty will lead them even farther ahead. □

COAL THE KILLER

PAUL J. NYDEN
Mr. Nyden is completing a book on militancy among the coal miners; he is writing it with the assistance of a grant from the Louis M. Rabinowitz Foundation.

> Coal is a thing that costs life to get. You may be holding a piece of coal in your hand and turn around and say: I wonder how that coal was got? Was there any blood shed in getting that coal? Was there any man's life lost in it? And there's many a one in this country has put coal on the fire, there's been a man's life lost in it. You're not burning coal, you're burning blood.
>
> —*A British collier; recorded by Ewan Maccoll on* The Big Hewer

"I resigned from the presidency of our local in June," Ray Hutchinson explained, "because I feel a working coal miner should be president. I had to retire from the mines a few months ago because I couldn't breathe any more. I'm all out of breath if I climb two flights of stairs or walk around my yard a couple of times. I always sleep with my head on three pillows and have to take three or four different medicines.

"Six doctors have told me I'm totally disabled. My lungs have lost 75 per cent of their breathing capacity, so I'm able to do sedentary work only. But I don't have enough education to do any kind of office work. Got some veterans' disability benefits, but they turned me down for black lung and Social Security payments. Right now I'm not doing nothing but working full time for the reform of our union."

Ray Hutchinson, just 41 last July, has a son and a daughter still in school. Since retiring from Island Creek's Beatrice Mine in Grundy, Va.—North America's gassiest mine and one of its dustiest—he has been very active in union affairs. He and his friend Tom Owens recently collected more than 3,000 signatures on a petition demanding autonomy for southwestern Virginia's District 28 of the United Mine Workers of America. Right now, coal miners have the right to elect all their district officials in only one of the union's twenty-five districts in the United States and Canada. Hutchinson has also been instrumental in drafting and passing resolutions that are then sent by his local to the Scale Committee, which is supposed to gather suggestions for the UMW's new contract. The present three-year contract expires on September 30.

The problems Ray Hutchinson faces today—they are not unusual in the coal fields—make the successful negotiation of a strong contract essential. Like his, locals throughout the mining regions have been passing as many as forty resolutions each and sending them on to their Scale committeemen. Thousands of resolutions pouring in from the rank and file demand safer working conditions, better protection of miners' health, fair grievance machinery, a shorter working day, better fringe benefits, and higher royalty payments to the Health and Welfare Fund.

Jesse Green, a 53-year-old retired miner, lives in a small frame house down the street from an iron and pipe foundry in Bessemer, Ala. "My dad worked in the mines for over fifty years; he started when he was only 10. Two years ago he died from lung disease. Most of the old miners is gone now. They had to be tough. Back when they were first organizing, the operators would treat a miner like a mule. In fact, they treated their mules better. If a miner died, it was easy for the operator to hire another man; but if a mule was killed, the operator had to buy another one.

"I began in the mines issuing lamps at the portal—when I was still going to high school. I put in twenty years, but quit in 1959 after I had an accident in the mine. I worked in a filling station up until last April, when I had a heart attack. The doctor told me I can never work again. You can't get any Social Security or disability benefits for at least six months after you are disabled. I also applied for black lung, but that's hard to get here in Alabama."

Jesse, his wife and their young children have just moved out of a house that cost them too much rent, now that they have no source of income. He sits in his living room or on his porch most of the day, wearing the blue shirt he's kept from the filling station job. When Jesse talks, he has to stop and gasp for breath. His hands and legs are swollen, and he looks like a man in his 70s. Jesse gave twenty years of his life to the coal companies. Today, when he can't work any more, he lives in a sparsely furnished house and can barely afford to feed his family.

In recent weeks, Tony Boyle, president of the UMW, has been stressing the $50-a-day wage and sick leave (coal miners receive *no sick leave* now). The miners have many other demands, and they may not go along with Boyle's

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contract if it fails to incorporate a lot of them. Miners certainly deserve a substantial wage hike and a cost-of-living escalator, but most of them feel as does Harry Patrick: "You won't find one miner in twenty who wants the $50 day. The miner has the most dangerous and unhealthy job in our country—we want better health and safety provisions!" Harry lives only a few miles from the portals of the Consol No. 9 mine in Farmington, W. Va. He used to work there in the fifties on the midnight shift, but he quit because he felt the conditions were too dangerous. "Had I kept on there, I would have been killed along with the seventy-eight miners who were working the midnight shift three years ago this November when gas blew up the whole place."

Modern continuous mining machines generate so much dust at the coal face that any man who works in the mines for ten years is almost sure to develop black lung. Men who are injured in mine accidents often go untreated for hours. "There should be a doctor or registered nurse at every mine portal at all times," reads one resolution to the Scale Committee. "This has long been the practice at the steel mills." An eastern Kentucky miner said, "I've seen miners die because of no medical care. You have a roof fall that pins a man underground and he needs immediate help. In remote areas it takes medical help so long to reach the mine that the man could die of shock."

Miners want authority restored to their three-man safety committees. Committeemen should be paid by the companies to spend one shift before work begins each week inspecting the entire mine to make sure it is safe. If any unsafe condition is found, the safety committee must have the power to shut the mine down without fear of being fired by the company. And the companies should be required to pay miners for any time lost while unsafe conditions are being remedied. Today, part of the problem is that the UMW's district offices never back up local safety committeemen, and even allow the companies to dismiss men who complain of dangerous working conditions.

One contract demand from the rank and file is for a six-hour day. Last June, at a meeting in St. Clairsville, Ohio, reform miners resolved: "With a six-hour day, miners will suffer less exposure to coal dust. A fourth shift will create more jobs for unemployed men in the coal fields. It should be devoted entirely to clean-up and repairs, making the mines safer places in which to work." British coal miners won a six-hour day back in 1919 (although they lost it to the coal companies a few years later). The shorter day is the rule, however, in several other European countries.

Miners want better pension and hospital benefits for themselves and their wives, although their needs in these areas can't be translated into direct contract demands. The Welfare and Retirement Fund was established in 1946 to provide these benefits. In 1952, Lewis negotiated an industry-wide agreement whereby all unionized coal companies agreed to pay into the fund a royalty of 40¢ per ton of coal mined, in exchange for being allowed to mechanize the operation. Despite the fact that the fund is administered jointly by the operators and the union, most miners identify the fund very closely with their union and look to it for better pension benefits instead of making demands on the companies directly.

Thus the existence of the fund has often deflected miners' demands and anger away from management and toward the union. Andrew "Cowboy" Vahaly, a strong union man since the 1920s, claims, "The royalty system was the ruination of the UMW. All the leaders are interested in now is tonnage, in getting the royalty. This is why the UMW has been a failure since 1946. Up until 1946, we had a strong and solid union." Union officials are guilty of financial mismanagement and have not in twenty years fought for an increase in royalty payments. But that should not obscure the fact that the responsibility to provide miners with adequate retirement, disability and hospital benefits rests with the companies.

Mike Vranic lives in Clarksville, Pa., in a four-room wooden row house that the coal company built back in the 1920s. His front porch sags and his living room is furnished with two old chairs and one sofa. Mike worked thirty-five years in the mines. "My left leg was crippled in a roof fall in 1947—not enough timbering. In 1956, my right leg was crippled by a mining machine. Now I have to hobble around on this stick." At 75, Vranic and his wife scrape by on his miner's pension of $150 a month and a little Social Security. If Mike should die before his wife, she will get only $2,000 more from the fund. She's not entitled to keep his pension or his hospital card for more than one year.

Once a man becomes disabled in a mine accident—no matter how old he is—the coal companies have no further use for him or his family. Jack Smith, his wife Della Mae and their four young children live in Rhodell, W. Va. Two months after they were married, Jack Smith lost both legs in a slate fall. He can't find employment anywhere today. "I lost both my legs mining coal," he comments. "Yet the company takes no responsibility to help me at all. I get $130 a month disability from the state and food stamps. That's it." Jack was among the leaders of the Disabled Miners and Widows strike in southern West Virginia in June 1970. "While I was on the picket line—in my wheelchair—one company official pushed me over backwards into a river!"

A good many miners today think that, in addition to helping men like Mike Vranic and Jack Smith fight the companies, the union should be looking for new ways to make life easier for disabled and retired miners—almost every one of whom suffers from poor health. "We should build nice UMWA homes for these old miners," suggests Frank Bozich, a 53-year-old retired man from Harmar mine local near Pittsburgh. "Homes where they can walk around on the grass. A lot of these old-timers who built up our great union don't have anyone any more. They're all alone. If the UMWA built nice homes, then these pensioners could be with their friends all the time."

Today, almost 75 per cent of all underground bituminous miners work in three states—West Virginia, Kentucky and Pennsylvania. Another 20 per cent—95 per cent in all—work in Virginia, Illinois, Ohio and Alabama. Many of these men live in the small coal towns tucked among the Appalachian hills. Other miners live in

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towns a few miles outside Pittsburgh, Birmingham and Charleston, W. Va.

The nationalities of coal miners vary somewhat from region to region. In District 5 around Pittsburgh [see "Voting for Their Lives" by Paul J. Nyden, *The Nation,* February 15], four out of every five miners have parents or grandparents who were born in the countries of Eastern or Southern Europe—Poland, the Slovak countries, Hungary, Lithuania, Italy, the Soviet Union. Black miners make up 7 per cent to 8 per cent of the district's work force.

As you travel south, the Eastern European population decreases, but it by no means disappears. Throughout southern West Virginia and eastern Kentucky, Italian, Polish and Slovak names are painted on mailboxes along the mountain roads. Boomer—a small town in the Kanawha Valley—remains today more than 80 per cent Italian. "Back during the 1921 strike and armed marches," Black Lung Association President Arnold Miller recounts, "the operators recruited strikebreakers from Sicily. But the operators' plans didn't work out. As soon as the Sicilians arrived and began mining, they figured out what was going on. They organized themselves, and later kept their local long after many others in the area had been broken. The Sicilians created a special problem for the operators' gun thugs. Being good union men, they always defended their fellow miners. Wherever there was labor trouble, they arrived in groups—2,000 strong. Miners living up Cabin and Paint Creeks took to frightening the thugs by merely hinting, 'The Italians are coming!' Then the thugs would board themselves up in houses with their machine guns. Many times nobody was coming at all."

The percentage of black miners increases the farther south you go. In southern West Virginia and eastern Kentucky, between 15 per cent and 20 per cent of the miners are black and they hold many local union offices. The reform movement in this area has several important black leaders. In Alabama, black miners used to comprise half of the UMW's membership and held 50 per cent of all local offices. Today both percentages have dropped to just above 25 per cent.

In locals there—and in the northern coal fields, as well—black men are often elected to the three-man Mine or Pit Committee, which handles day-to-day grievances. A committeeman must be both articulate and unafraid to risk his job, since management often attempts to silence rank-and-file discontent by firing committeemen. A black miner will often receive more votes than anyone else for the Pit committee, which automatically makes him committee chairman.

More than 1,500 Mexican-American miners with their families lived in the Logan County region of West Virginia in the thirties. Today, however, only fifty are working in the mines. John Mendez, a leader of the Black Lung Association today, remembers when "every Saturday night in the coal camps there were long political arguments among the Villistas, the Zapatistas and the Carranzistas. The revolution was fought all over again!"

The parochialism and prejudices of miners in the southern Appalachian coal fields are often exaggerated by commentators who, first of all, fail to observe the region's ethnic and racial diversity. "Anglo-Saxon" or "old stock" miners are among the first to say they don't choose either their friends or their union leaders along racial or ethnic lines. When prejudices and hatred are stirred up in the coal fields today, it is generally done by district or international union *officials.* Last fall, some Boyle payrollers in District 5 campaigned against Miners for Democracy by telling pensioners, "Don't vote for that MFD ticket. There's a *nigger* running on it." After Jock Yablonski's challenge to the entrenched leadership failed in 1969, International Vice President George Titler said it was good he lost, remarking that he was tired of those Hunkies in Pennsylvania trying to take over the union.

Ethnic and racial prejudice benefits no one as much as the coal operators. Whenever miners have feuded among themselves, the operators have been able to pay them lower wages and treat them badly in the mines. Expressing a feeling widely held among rank-and-file miners, Bill Worthington—who has lived all his life in Kentucky's infamous Harlan County and who is today the major rank-and-file leader in eastern Kentucky—discussed the ethnic background necessary for union leadership. "I don't think your name or your background should matter at all. If your last name is Muleface, and you'll do the job right, then let's vote for Muleface!"

All this is not to say that racism is totally eliminated from the UMW. As James Millner, a black pensioner from southern West Virginia, put it: "The union didn't protect us when the companies pushed blacks out of the industry in disproportionate numbers when the mines were mechanized in the fifties. And today, when companies need more manpower because of increasing production, the companies are hiring few young black men. And our union isn't doing anything about it." But the source of racism lies in the policies of the coal companies, as Bill Worthington stresses. "The operators try to divide black and white. It's a master plan to keep confusion among the workers—keep the poor people fighting one another." Confusion and division are especially important to coal companies in eastern Kentucky. Half of the mines there are nonunion; many mines once had unions which the companies have broken in the last twenty years. Nonunion mines sometimes pay as low as $15 a day with no vacation pay, no hospital benefits and no pensions, even some union mines pay less than union scale. And Worthington maintains that it is generally known that "even at the small truck mines around here, the mine owners take in $100 of clear profit from the coal one miner produces in an eight-hour shift."

Worthington, who was disabled two years ago when a roof fall broke his ankle in thirteen places, explains the special problems he faced as a black miner. "There were lots of black men in the Chevrolet mine when I began working with the Blue Diamond Coal Company. They were all coal loaders. I was the first black man to do anything else. I became a brakeman; later I became their first black motorman. I told them what job I wanted—and that I wouldn't continue working if I didn't get it.

"While I was a brakeman, the company had me train about 100 white men to be motormen. Finally, when I insisted on being promoted to that job myself, they fired me, saying I was strong-headed. But they rehired me two

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days later *as a motorman,* because they needed me. At the time, I felt they wanted to keep me on as brakeman because I was such a good teacher for the new men. But later I got to thinking that they probably felt it didn't matter much if I got myself killed braking for these greenhorns."

If a black miner runs a piece of machinery today, it is most often the engine which hauls coal cars from the face to the tipple outside. One white miner explained, "The colored miners really like to run motors because that's the easiest job in the mines." Shirley Coles, a black man who put forty-three years in the mines of Mercer County, West Virginia, offered a different explanation: "The brakeman's job was always the lowest paid job in the mine next to hand loading. Becoming a brakeman was the only way a black person could advance. As a brakeman, you work behind the motorman. You open and shut the trapdoors; you have to sprag moving cars and fasten couples. You push empties alongside tracks by hand. The brakeman has a dangerous job and does all the footwork. It is because of our experience as brakemen that we could become motormen when positions opened up."

Black and white miners have nearly always stood together in building their union. In the 1890s, white miners infiltrated the Ku Klux Klan in Alabama to block it from attacking the UMW which was organizing white and black miners together into the same locals. But often solidarity breaks down once miners leave the mine. "Underground, the white and black get along O.K. We would eat out of each other's buckets," Coles explained. "But the minute we got outdoors and washed the coal dust off our faces, some white miners became different men. They remembered they were white and we were black."

COAL MINE
SAFETY
ENFORCER
STANDARDS
PUBLIC RELATIONS; CREATING POLITICAL CAMPAIGN COMMERCIALS; HANDLING THE PRESS; POLITICAL FUND-RAISING; ADVICE ON USE OF POLITICAL ISSUES.

Graham, Arkansas Gazette (Little Rock)

Although the companies would like to see racist ideas preserved, white miners today—especially young white miners—are discarding racial and ethnic prejudices. The existence of a union which has organized all miners is making this progress possible. This is a concrete illustration that even the weakened UMW is far better than no UMW at all. Miners today must struggle to reform their union, but at least they don't have to build it from scratch. "In the 1930s Lewis issued a call to 'organize the unorganized.' Today, we have to 'organize the organized,' " Harry Patrick quipped. "As for myself," he went on, "I wouldn't work in any mine for fifteen minutes without a union. It's not the union we're fighting against. It's the rotten leadership."

When a man works in the coal mines of our country, he puts his life on the line every time the cage goes down. With every year he puts in underground, more and more of his lung tissue becomes black and hard. The miners insist that steps be taken to keep dust levels down and to prevent future Farmingtons and Hydens from taking place. But the contract does not revolve around money and safety issues alone. Miners want a better *way* of life for themselves and their families. Almost every coal town consists of monotonous rows of company homes built around the towering and smoldering slate dumps. The main street is lined with a few stores and churches, a firehouse, a school, a post office, several beer gardens, maybe a Slovak or Hungarian club and the union hall. A good bookstore or a movie theatre is almost unknown. There are few or no good radio and television stations.

Miners are concerned with a better life for everyone else, too. Most underground miners (and even some strip miners) protest against the way strip-mine operators are ravaging their mountains, rivers and forests. The average coal miner dislikes Nixon, Agnew and their reactionary policies. He supports the students' right to protest and wants to see the war in Vietnam ended. "After all, it's our sons Nixon's sending over there to kill and be killed in an absolutely senseless war." In a recent survey I made of local presidents in the Pittsburgh area, of those who expressed an opinion on the war (25 per cent offered no opinion at all), 80 per cent advocated *immediate withdrawal* of U.S. troops from Indochina.

A notion prevalent in the country today is that coal miners are no longer very important. Yet in 1970, miners produced 596 million tons of coal, a production level approaching the all-time high of 631 million tons in 1947. Research on the conversion of coal into gasoline and natural gas is well advanced; experimental plants are already in operation. These processes will open up huge new markets in the near future. The U.S. Bureau of Mines estimates that within thirty years there will be a market for 1,975 million tons of coal annually. Coal represents 74 per cent of the "estimated total ultimately recoverable reserves" of fuels in the United States (percentages based on Btu content.) The other 26 per cent includes petroleum, natural gas, shale oil and uranium oxide. Much of our fuel is imported, but these statistics show clearly that the importance of coal is *growing,* not declining.

Coal miners will remain a very important sector of the American working class, in terms both of the importance

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of the mineral they produce and of the militant leadership they can offer to the entire labor movement when they oust their present do-nothing union leadership.

The miners face a crisis this fall. They must fight the coal operators to win a contract that will bring their wages and benefits within range of those already being received by workers in auto, steel, rubber and other basic industries. The miners are preparing to fight the Nixon Administration's wage-freeze and no-strike policies. "All the miners got angry when Nixon froze wages—but not company profits—especially on the eve of our contract. If we have to strike to get a good one, you can be sure we will," asserted western Pennsylvania miners. Finally, coal miners must fight to prevent their own leadership from negotiating another sellout contract.

The chances are that the coal miners will have to go out on strike for a number of weeks or months to force the companies to come across. If the strike is long, there will be a nationwide shortage of coal. In their struggle against the operators, the miners do not want to anger the public; they want public support for their struggles.

Coal generates more than half the nation's electricity today; 55 per cent of all coal mined is burned in power-generating plants. The steel mills use another 18 per cent, primarily for coking their huge blast furnaces. Another 16 per cent is used in various manufacturing processes, such as in cement, rubber and plastic production. Most of the remaining tonnage is exported. To the extent that all of us benefit from these products, *we owe the miners all the support they ask us for.* Back in 1922, coal miners issued an appeal to the public during a long and bitter strike. Their appeal could be reissued this week: "You people out there who burn the coal, it's *you* we're working for, not the operators. *You* make the operator do the right thing; we have a right to your help. Our real partner is the public." □

ACTORS' EQUITY

DO YOU CALL THAT A UNION?

DAVID WEINSTEIN

Mr. Weinstein, who gathered the information for this article with the help of Courtney Lane, a professional—and unemployed—actress, is a free-lance journalist. He recently reported on the guerrilla struggle in Rhodesia for the BBC and British periodicals.

Of all the afflictions visited upon wage earners in America, possibly the most damaging is a little blue or white card with the words "Actors' Equity Association" across the top. The card identifies the holder as a professional stage actor, a member of the actors' union, Actors' Equity. And from all available statistics, the income and employment prospects of an Equity member are not nearly as good as those of a poor black, recently arrived in a big-city ghetto from a Southern dirt farm. Unemployment in the theatre, in years when the rest of the economy is booming, averages around 80 per cent. Most actors work less than ten weeks a year, so that out of a union membership of 15,000 or 16,000, maybe 13,000 on any given day are walking the streets looking for a sale on hot dogs. Out of the average actor's yearly income from all sources, of about $2,500, close to $1,200 must be spent on the unique and inevitable expenses of the trade.

The published incomes of a few stars are significant only in that they mask the reality and inflate the statistics. Even on Broadway, half the actors earn less than $2,000 a year. One of the more prominent agents in the business, who lists among his clients several stars now playing on Broadway, said simply, "No sane person would become an actor. Look at the odds."

Still, somehow, some people become possessed by the idea that life is most fully felt and lived on a stage. They commit themselves to a career in theatre, to a lifelong game of chance whose brutalizing insecurity and hopelessly tantalizing odds are duplicated nowhere else. But perhaps their attraction to the stage would be less an affliction and more a reasonable choice if the officials at Actors' Equity were a little slower to share the agent's opinion. Even in the offices of the actors' union, one hears remarks like ". . . it's no secret that a lot of actors are irrational, irresponsible, even drunks. Of course we feel badly about the situation, but there's nothing we can do."

And nothing is about what Equity seems to do. As expressed by one Equity official, "There's just no place here for an aggressive union. We're essentially a holding operation; we just try to change with the environment." Again, "We can't really take the initiative in anything, so we wait for the employers, the producers, to come to us. It's just what we have to do, all we can do."

A feeling of inevitability and helplessness at Equity greets the outsider's concern and incredulity with shoulder-shrugging boredom. Undoubtedly, the rules and agreements Equity has bargained for during the sixty years of its existence have eliminated from the trade some of the worst abuse and exploitation. But not unexpectedly, 75 pages of contract specifying the height of stairs between the dressing room and the stage or the distance between bus seats on tour still leave a great many problems to be dealt with. The immediate impression is that the actor's battle is conceded without being fought.

Even some of the protection won by Equity has turned out to be illusory. The union hailed as a "major breakthrough" the 1964 negotiation of an "open interview" contract clause, whereby the producers of a new show must see any union actor who wants to apply for a part. But although the open call is intended to guarantee every union actor access to employers and jobs, the actors and Equity, too, know that most productions are cast long before the call, that it is held largely as a matter of form. The stream

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of actors pouring into every open call is testimony more to the desperation of the actors than it is to any improvement won by Equity. There will be perhaps 200 candidates for each role in an Off-Broadway play paying about $75 a week, or a Broadway play paying $164.45. Many of the actors are clearly disqualified from the parts available by age or appearance, but still they all spend three hours or more waiting for the chance to be seen for five minutes and the chance to leave a photograph—on the still more remote chance that some year, they'll be remembered.

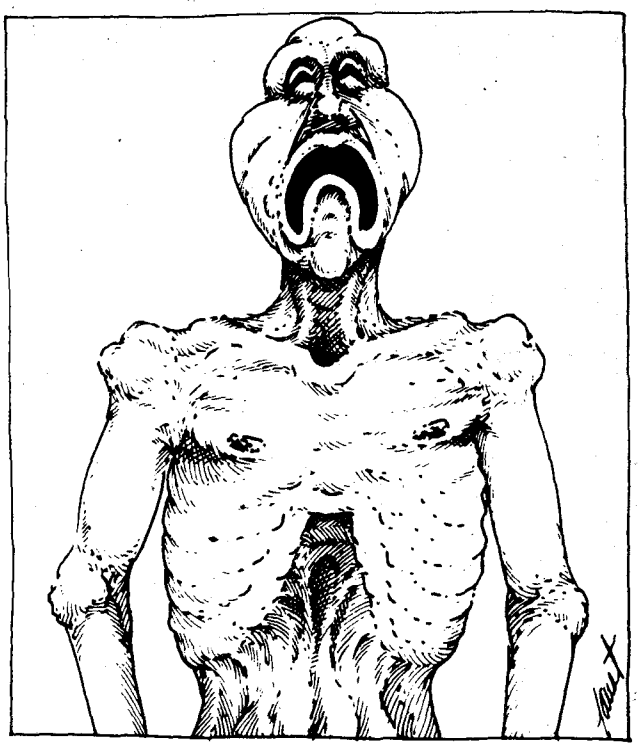
Again, Equity proclaims itself "in the forefront of the civil rights movement" in negotiating opportunities for minority actors. But at the same time, an Equity official leans across his desk and whispers, "I just don't know what we're going to do with all the blacks who've been drawn into the trade by one-time affairs like the black *Hello, Dolly*. Right now a lot of them are getting unpaid work in Newark. I hope they stay there."

However desperate the actor, the union sees itself as immobilized either by the respect due the artistic freedom of theatrical management or by its own poverty and the depression in the industry. The results are predictable. Compared to the rest of us, actors are growing steadily poorer. Compared even to other people in theatre—make-up assistants, wardrobe mistresses, stagehands, ticket takers, ushers—actors are growing poorer, and their salaries claim an ever diminishing share of production budgets. Minimum salaries range from $75 a week Off-Broadway to $164.45 on Broadway, and close to three-quarters of all working actors get the minimum. (Recent arbitration of last fall's Off-Broadway strike has raised the minimum there to $100.)

Equity's concern for the artistic freedom of producers and directors leads it to refuse any proposals for contract rules that would guarantee employment to a greater percentage of its members. It rejects the reverse seniority arrangements common in many unions or any rule that would spread whatever work is available among more actors. It also rejects any notion of restricting entry into the profession.

Again, the results are predictable. A few actors work the year round; thousands of others never work at all. Because anybody who can get himself signed to an Equity production is handed a lifetime Equity membership, the union's membership has exploded out of all proportion to available employment. But a huge and constant pool of unemployed actors, explained an Equity official, is no objection. "We need a large supply of performers, a constant inflow of new faces and total freedom in casting, to make sure each producer gets exactly what he wants." The same official, when asked about Equity's efforts to promote jobs for its members, whispered that Equity's idea of a secret weapon is to revive a weak show by permitting a cut in a principal's salary. On deaf ears fall arguments to the effect that just very loose restrictions on employer discretion, restrictions that are basic to any union contract, would relieve some of the worst inequities in the trade and maybe even raise artistic standards by breaking casting stereotypes.

Out of the same concern for artistic freedom, Equity rejects any proposal to extract from the agents it franchises a commitment to good-faith representation for a share of the Equity members otherwise unable to obtain representation. Agents perform a labor of convenience, for a fee of 10 per cent or more, channeling talent to new jobs. The difficulty or even the impossibility of access to an agent is often the greatest and, since it is only a matter of procedure, the most unnecessary obstacle between performers and work. The personal judgment of an agent can obliterate a career, effectively forbidding a performer even the chance to be seen by directors and producers. But



despite all the dangers of arbitrariness and personal bias in the agent's decision, based on a glance at a glossy picture or, for the lucky actor, a five-minute interview, Equity refuses to intervene. Consequently, agents can afford to sneer at proposals of Equity's own representative, Milton Lyon, for the establishment of an alternative and more equitable talent-channeling system. "His system would die. Everyone would know it was just filled with our rejects."

If it is not artistic freedom that inhibits Equity, then it is the depressed state of the industry. Theatre is dying, the argument runs; production is riskier, failures more numerous, and profits slimmer. "Employers can't afford any better treatment for performers, and our aggressiveness could put the whole industry under."

It is doubtful that any employer engaged in a labor negotiation has ever neglected to plead poverty and the dangers of a complete shutdown, but only at Equity is the argument totally disarming. Equity's reasoning is roughly equivalent to a refusal by the UAW to press hard in contract negotiations for fear that America would have no more cars. Had the other theatre personnel and their unions not been so successful in improving their positions, Equity's pleas of circumstantial impotence might tease belief.

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But apparently out of fear that producers will not fight for their own freedom and survival, Equity takes up their fight for them and forgets that there is no one left to defend the actor. Equity has become, then, more an employment agency than a union. It has come to occupy the position, unique for a union, of guarding management interests. It has become a co-promoter of a large and largely unused pool of acting talent and then forgotten its obligation to represent that pool, if only to see that it's fed. Nowhere in the list of demands presented by Equity during last fall's Off-Broadway strike was there any proposal to generate employment for a greater percentage of its members. In an industry characterized by the extraordinary difficulty of getting a job in the first place, Equity's demands were all focused on additional benefits and protections for those employed. Because they make up less than 20 per cent of the union's membership, it might be said that the strike was irrelevant. Although trade conditions in the interval have deteriorated to levels unknown anywhere else, even in the depths of the depression, nothing much has changed at the union since *The New York Times* wrote of the 1964 contract negotiations, "Equity had nothing too drastic to demand in any direction. . . ."

However worthy the cause of artistic freedom, or the financial survival of the industry, Actors' Equity is an inappropriate champion. Artistic freedom can be used to justify any kind of manipulation of performers, and Equity cannot defend both. The ideal has another and more natural protector in the producing interests. The performer has no one but Equity.

Equity's readiness to sacrifice the actor's welfare to artistic freedom merely perpetuates a popular feeling that the actor is in it for the glamour and the fabled riches, that simple work and wages aren't really his object and so his deprivation doesn't matter. The union's own persistence in treating actors as something other than labor wishing to work at a chosen occupation for a fair wage blinds it to the changes necessary if it is ever to offer the actor any kind of relief. No one knows how many fewer pyramids there are in the world, or how many Taj Mahals have never been built, because rulers were long ago forbidden the use of their people as slaves. No matter what the creative possibilities of such projects, they were held not worth the human costs. Until Equity begins to make the same judgments, actors will have no union.

Similarly, neither the poverty of the industry nor that of the union should consign Equity to insignificance. Undoubtedly, the theatre often appears dead or dying. Over the past fifty years, new productions on Broadway have declined from a peak of almost 200 a year to forty or forty-five. Even Off-Broadway productions are only half as numerous as they were five or six years ago, and summer stock has fallen off slightly. Theatre management is everywhere caught in a squeeze. From 1950 to 1965, for example, costs grew about 6 per cent a year, while ticket prices and income were growing only 3 per cent a year.

Still, grosses are holding up, and the theatre manages every year to yield a net profit. And still, there is much that Equity can do for the actor. The significant rising costs in theatrical production are advertising and business expenses, management's inefficiency in promotion and ticket distribution, and not actors' salaries. If Equity refrains from pushing hard for salary increases, it is only rewarding and supporting management inefficiency at the actor's expense.

Possibly even more significant for Equity are studies showing that the theatre audience is drawn from a tiny fraction of the population. The Broadway theatregoer is a white, middle-aged, middle- to upper-class professional. Because the rest of the population, the young, the minorities, are almost totally unrepresented in the audience, the possibilities of cultivating a new public and so reviving theatre and theatrical employment are vast.

Equity has chosen to take the statistic as a sign of death, as a problem without solution and so another reason for inactivity. Any venture by Equity into audience development is held to be prohibitively expensive, but at the same time, in churches and lofts all over New York, unemployed professional actors and directors are presenting meticulously crafted and rehearsed showcase productions on budgets more conveniently measured in cents than in dollars. In a Chelsea church, provided rent-free in return for an assurance that props and backdrops will disappear in time for regular services, a couple sharing more than twenty years' experience in the theatre regularly slide the altar aside and present one-month runs of plays that have been rehearsed for up to six months. More important, their company has loaded entire productions onto the subway and taken theatre into the ghetto, into libraries and schools. For a promise of something that can be made to resemble a stage, the company is ready at any time to give its plays free anywhere in the city to people who may never previously have been exposed to professional theatre. The couple's attempts to interest Equity in their audience development projects have failed, and because neither of them can make a living on stage, they hold part time jobs elsewhere to finance their ten-hour day at the church.

There seems to operate in the theatre a natural law which says that whatever Equity insists cannot be done, someone is doing somewhere. Actors need to act. The same compulsion that is the source of their aching frustration is the source also of immense initiative and dedication. Yet this energy is entirely ignored by Equity. With its pre-existing organization and lines of communication, with a great pool of unused talent that is destroying itself for want of an outlet—that is not being paid anyway and that wants above all a chance to act—Equity is in an ideal position to produce showcase theatre throughout the city and to cultivate the vast potential audience whose absence from Broadway is strangling commercial theatre. Unlike other unions that cannot function independently within a depressed industry, Equity could if it would produce its own product, virtually free.

Public subsidy may be the only long-term solution to the theatre depression, but thus far government has been unwilling to return to the theatre, even to insure its survival, some of the tax money it takes from the box office. Grants are typically minimal and heavily qualified. Education is lavishly subsidized; the theatre is left to survive on the subsidies represented by a performer's willingness to eat less than other people.

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Help from the general public is probably less likely for actors than it is for any other union's members. The kind of popular emotion that helps Cesar Chavez's grape pickers doesn't seem available to actors. The conventional notion of the theatre's riches and glamour persists in the face of trade statistics suggesting a crisis far more severe than others which have sparked ghetto rebellions and massive outpourings of federal aid and public sympathy. Indeed, actors don't bear much resemblance to the starving masses, but it is said in the trade that looking fed when hungry, looking modish in made-overs, and looking comfortable while terrified is the most genuine acting there is. "You can't ever let a director or producer know you're hungry," explained an actor finally beginning to work steadily after eleven years out of work. "It scares them."

Even in areas where the depression in the industry or its own poverty and respect for artistic freedom cannot possibly inhibit Equity, it still manages more often than not to find reason not to act. It has been suggested to Equity that it could substantially reduce the professional expenses that cut in half the already meager incomes of its members. Simply by making referrals, even if it were only to publish and post an appropriate list, Equity could make available to its members professional services like photography, coaching and audition accompaniment at far less than the frequently excessive commercial rates. All of these skills are found within Equity's membership and are largely unused. But Equity's answer is, "We couldn't possibly do that because some of our members operate commercial studios for these services and they would scream."

It is tempting to argue back that since Equity members, operating as commercial accompanists, for example, are certainly outnumbered by actors unable to pay the commercial rates and actor-musicians eager to pick up an extra $5 or $10, the referral proposal would be upheld by a vote of the membership. But the results of a vote are not at all certain. Perhaps as a reflection on the relevance of Equity policy, sometimes as little as a third of the eligible membership votes in union elections. And indeed, it seems strange that in an industry suffering from massive unemployment and poverty-level incomes, the last union presidential election was fought around issues like streamlining office procedure.

Even under a newly installed black president and a first vice president who is well known as a friend of the downtrodden, there is just not much happening at Equity. The Library Theatre, an actors' showcase, and the Department To Extend Professional Theatre, a consulting agency designed to encourage the growth of regional theatre, are the only long-term, developmental programs in existence at Equity. Both have to struggle with the Equity council to get the minimum funds for survival. Together, they share less than $35,000 from an annual Equity budget that ranges between $750,000 and $1 million. And regardless of the financial prospects for the department, its effectiveness is doubtful. Regional theatres are showing themselves unable to earn their expenses. Since the price in artistic compromise exacted from them in return for community charitable support is often crippling, many of them are closing.

Perhaps Equity won't find its way back from insignificance and become more a union than an employment agency until someone challenges a leadership sprinkled with box-office names. The stars, who are comfortable in their wealth and fame and who often own a producing interest, do not have a natural commitment to change. And of course, it is the poverty of the average actor that subsidizes the star's windfall. A star salary is economic to theatrical management only because Equity has permitted it to be. To the extent that it is sustained by an undervaluation of the worth of the supporting cast, the star salary is management's error and the actor's bad luck. □

LETTERS *(Continued from page 226)*

When I was there everyone had his escape, whether in drugs or alcohol, or both; it helped keep him alive. I took my escape as did others in smoking marijuana. With this I could create my own world, a beautiful world full of happiness and illusions. With many others this isn't enough. They need harder drugs, and they need more than a new world.

Supporting a war that is for nothing is bad enough, but when you have to obey with blind obedience leaders whose lives thrive on war, then your mind starts to deteriorate. When you have to kill not only out of self-preservation but merely for the sake of your superior's thirst for blood, then your mind begins to shatter. Then there are no other worlds to escape to. Then you have to escape your own mind.

David Kashimba

girl vs. G-man

Portland, Ore.

DEAR SIRS: Cheryl James, 18, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Charles T. James, Sr., 415 N. Jarrett St., was sentenced in April by Judge Gus. J. Solomon to eighteen months in Terminal Island, San Pedro, a correctional institute, for alleged assault of an FBI officer. The officer was one of four who went to the family residence on January 4 looking for Charles James, Jr., 20, a Purple Heart Vietnam veteran, who was AWOL from the Navy after being denied leave to come home to marry the mother of his child.

Cheryl James was placed in federal custody on June 15, two weeks after her graduation from Jefferson High School. Her brother currently is serving a six-year sentence in a federal prison at Littleton, Colo., also for alleged assault of a federal officer. Another sister, Martha, 15, received three-years' probation for the same allegation.

A defense committee, composed of several teachers, ministers, attorneys, social workers, labor and civil rights leaders, and other citizens, has expressed concern about the manner in which the federal agents entered the James residence "without proper identification" to the family head, about what they consider an "unduly severe sentence for a young and frail girl without criminal record," and concern over the sentencing of a once wounded veteran to a long term. Committee members also expressed concern over the "racist, conflict-provoking manner" of the FBI agents during the arrests at the James home.

The group has received some financial support from Portland-area churches, and is continuing to seek funds for legal appeal, as well as volunteer assistance. Address for the committee is P.O. Box 1186, Portland, Ore. 97207.

A. C. Spencer III

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BOOKS & THE ARTS

Nicholas and Alexander: Pushkin's Life

PUSHKIN. *By Henri Troyat. Translated from the French by Nancy Amphoux. Doubleday & Co. 655 pp. $10.*

DONALD FANGER
Mr. Fanger, author of Dostoevsky and Romantic Realism (*Harvard University Press*), *teaches Russian and comparative literature at Harvard.*

> The emperor's large white hand was outstretched, open, toward Pushkin. In it Pushkin placed his small, dirty hand with the long fingernails. He felt as though he were falling off a cliff. He closed his eyes in exhaustion, shame and rapture.
>
> "You have been foolish long enough," said the emperor. "I hope you will be more sensible after this, and there will be no more quarrels between us. You will send everything you write to me. From now on, I shall be your censor."
>
> Pushkin's heart flooded with an infinity of gratitude. Free! Free! He was free! And he had not sold his soul, he had not humbled himself before this smiling potentate. Giddy and weak, he allowed himself to be led into the next room, filled with uniformed courtiers. Facing all those masks frozen in expressions of honeyed respect, Nicholas I loudly declared, "Gentlemen, here is the new Pushkin. Forget the other."

Monsieur Troyat is not out to give us a new Pushkin, though he would, like the Czar, have us forget the old one—in this case a truncated English version of the present biography, which appeared in 1950 and managed to omit almost everything that might explain Pushkin's principal claim to our attention. What this new and complete translation now offers is an admirably full, admirably successful account, probably the best in any language, of the man, the poet, and the times that shaped both.

The method is resolutely and appropriately old-fashioned. The book aims to introduce without simplifying; so the author explains without complicating. Methodologies do not tempt him. He gives a circumstantial account of Pushkin's loveless childhood home, his lifelong tendency to court fatal risks, his compulsive gambling, his chronic womanizing, his suicidal marriage—without once setting up as diagnostician or invoking concepts which might not have been available to Pushkin himself. He approaches his subject throughout with the relentless but tactful curiosity of a man of the world who would be perplexed to hear that tact might be an impediment to understanding.

Complexity, then, enters the picture as pattern, rather than by way of the constituent terms themselves. Troyat's Pushkin is not a riddle to be unraveled; protean, he is a field of force which can be apprehended only in movement. "Pushkin was never dominated by a single idea, occupation, or person. It would be a mistake to imagine him exclusively absorbed by any preoccupation, political, poetic or amorous. Everything in him called out and responded to everything else. . . . Every pleasure and every danger beckoned to him simultaneously. He could only possess the whole of himself when he was alone in his room with his papers and books." If he had lived as he wrote, the author notes, "Pushkin would have been a calm and happy man; if he had written as he lived, he would have been a wild-eyed, puerile, verbose romantic."

Troyat's subject thus emerges from the constant interplay between the man, whose reckless vitality he chronicles with admiration, apprehension and a nice eye for anecdote, and the writer, whose qualities and progress he outlines, pausing at regular intervals to take stock and summarize. Some of these stock-takings may raise an eyebrow: "At the threshold of Russian literature—somber, prophetic, tormented—stands this young man surrounded by a halo of joy. . . . He is prodigiously healthy and male; he is exceptionally complete. He makes one want to live." In context, however, they work well enough, the sheer bulk of reported detail supplying a ballast, along with the grounds for adjustment. (This kind of writing is a bit like Balzac's in the large novels, effective when absorbed rapidly in large units, but startlingly—and somehow unfairly—diminished when excerpted and paused over.) As for the analyses of Pushkin's works, they are quite properly subordinated to the biographer's purpose; less than independent essays, they are still a good deal more than perfunctory summaries. (The reader curious to form a fuller impression of Pushkin's art may well want to go on to John Bayley's recent book, but he will not have been led astray by Troyat.) And they are, as the author insists, crucial to his undertaking in the way they suggest, concretely, the nature of the poet's genius, because the pathos of his unfolding fate depends on our seeing him as the bearer of an extraordinary gift, so that every threat to the man gains resonance as a threat to the gift as well.

"Fate" is a past-tense, hindsight notion; in the present, it manifests itself as that organic unit which Ortega called the self and its "circumstance." And the depiction of circumstance must rank high among the excellences of this book.

The physical, cultural and social milieus in which the poet was fated to move are all vividly evoked—Moscow, Petersburg, Kishinev, Odessa, Trigorskoe, Boldino—the final effect being to compel admiration for the way his gift could transcend their several kinds of poverty. By the same token, the stages of the career are set forth, from the moment when, at 20, he became "the first Russian poet to be elected by his readers," to the moment when, a year before his death at 38, he seemed to have become "too great for his public."

The chief circumstance, however—and, one is tempted to say, the most familiarly Russian—was the government's apprehensive and chronic concern with him. He could neither shake it off nor deal with it. Unremitting surveillance—at one point even the poet's father was set to spy on him!—and chronic mistrust dogged him almost from the moment he left school. For three liberal poems, which circulated widely in manuscript, he was banished first to the south, then to his provincial estate. His requests to travel were persistently denied—even then "abroad" was a concept that made Russian officials squirm—with the result that the most European of Russian poets never did manage to see Europe.

Europe? For a while it seemed he might never be allowed to see Petersburg again. "I have been in exile six years now, and no matter what they say, I am only 26," he writes in a letter. He was not involved in the Decembrist uprising, in good part because his Decembrist friends knew him for an enthusiast, unfit for conspiracy. This, however, did not relieve him of responsibility in the government's view. "Of course you are not implicated," his friend Zhukovsky wrote him, "but your poems have been found among the papers of every one of the accused"—and all the hopelessness of Pushkin's position is implicit in his comment—"not the best way to reconcile yourself with the gov-

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ernment!" How could he? Where governments concern themselves with the opinions of their citizens, a great writer must appear to be (as one of Solzhenitsyn's characters puts it) "a kind of second government."

The implied terms for a reconciliation were ominous: Pushkin must cease to appeal to all these dangerous young people; he must cease to be Pushkin. Or else the men who made up the government would have to become different. When Nicholas I succeeded Alexander as czar, a new period did begin. Nicholas summoned Pushkin, found him "the most intelligent man in Russia," and ended his exile—on the terms indicated in the quotation above. They did not, of course, spell freedom. Surveillance was not suspended; trust never entered the picture. Subsequent events were to show that benevolent government attention was no better than its opposite.

For one thing, an army of secret policemen, with Count Benkendorf at their head, were busy doing their job; in this case, deploying their ingenuity in finding evidence to fit their unchangeable image of the poet as subversive. Lines from old poems were wrenched out of context and treated as if they were new; "cases" once put to rest were resurrected; literary advice was proffered, while permission to publish was withheld.* The baroque engraving on the cover of *The Gypsies* was made, under scrutiny, to reveal a symbolic call to revolution and assassination! And when the poet vented his rage at these indignities in private letters, the letters were intercepted and construed as verifying the worst fears of the authorities about his unreliability. In Troyat's summary, "once the police take an interest in you, they never let you go; once the emperor has noticed you, you forfeit all right to your own private life."

Pushkin's misguided marriage to a shallow beauty thirteen years his junior increased his dependence on the Czar as much as it deepened his personal unhappiness. Frustration and humiliation, incomprehension and immersion in trivia were the common factors, and while Troyat's substantial account of them does not change the picture of his tortured last years as it has been described earlier (by Mirsky, for example, in his slender critical biography, or by Ernest Simmons in his 1937 book), it does, by sheer density of detail, make this familiar story almost unbearably vivid and actual. There are elements of genuine tragedy in the way the poet, who longed increasingly for domestic peace and seclusion, was forced instead "to live in a dress shop and frequent glittering drawing rooms in which everyone hated the sight of him." In treating Natalya, whose frivolity created this situation, Troyat is admirably evenhanded. She was a "bland, silly, affectionless child" when Pushkin married her, and remained one for him throughout. But the dashing guardsman D'Anthès, who gave the poet his fatal wound in a duel, could, just because he was "a male replica of Natalya"—beautiful, conventional and vapid—find her and make her feel herself a woman. One is tempted to say that it was an insipid society romance that triggered the denouement of Pushkin's tragedy; but that denouement—the duel Pushkin had sought so assiduously—was also for him a release, and perhaps the only conceivable one.

For though he might possibly have left Natalya and their children, the embrace of Nicholas and his servants would have remained. An attempt to resign from his court position (assumed so that Natalya might be able to attend court balls) had been rebuffed; instead the Czar lent him money, cementing the dependency.

His very death seemed dangerous to the government which had had no use for him living. "Mr. Pushkin's death," wrote the Dutch Ambassador Heckeren, adoptive father of his killer, "has revealed, or so the authorities seem to believe, the existence of a party of which he was the leader, perhaps only by virtue of his eminently Russian talent." As a result, the censors were to allow no obituary notices in the press; university professors and students in Petersburg were forbidden to leave their classes for the funeral—which was announced for St. Isaac's Cathedral but held, by official command, at another, surreptitiously. The corpse was called for at midnight by a police detachment; the service was attended largely by government functionaries; afterward the coffin was shipped off, hidden under a load of straw, in a convoy of police, for secret burial. His papers were sorted by his friend Zhukovsky—but in the presence of a police general. Zhukovsky was too delicate to read private letters, but the police, of course, were not.

The terms of this vividly told story seem, alas, only too typically Russian. If the way of the writer eased somewhat in the decades that followed (one might compare the solemn public funeral of Turgenev forty-six years later), we have seen savage regression in our own century, followed by a series of small thaws and quick freezes, the chain of dependence on a suspicious government being loosened or tightened a bit—but never let go, and seldom challenged. Yet our own century has continued to show, as well, how genius can still turn to account and so transcend all those limitations which power puts on it. Troyat does not touch on these parallels, but he does allow us to understand why, virtually without exception, the Russian writers who followed Pushkin left testimonials of admiration and gratitude for his example. □

*E.g., Benkendorf on the manuscript of *Boris Godunov*: "His Majesty has deigned to read your work with the greatest pleasure, and in the margin of the report on it which I submitted to him, has kindly written in his own hand, 'I consider that Mr. Pushkin would achieve his purpose more nearly if, after detailed expurgation, he were to transform his comedy [*sic*!] into a story or historical tale in the style of Walter Scott.' I am flattered to be the echo of the very benevolent attention accorded by His Majesty to your distinguished talent."

The Linear Canadian

THE CRITICAL PATH: An Essay on the Social Context of Literary Criticism. *By Northrop Frye. Indiana University Press. 176 pp. $4.95.*

DAVID BROMWICH
Mr. Bromwich is a free-lance writer, and film critic for Dissent.

To an academic audience Northrop Frye is well known as an expositor of Blake, the author of *Anatomy of Criticism*, and presiding eminence over his own school of "myth critics," but in recent years Frye has published a number of books on subjects less strictly literary, got together out of his extremely active life as a lecturer. *The Well-Tempered Critic* is surely the best of these, bringing order to the problem of style, marking the intimate connection of style and social meaning. *The Modern Century* and now *The Critical Path* have a slightly different emphasis, but their aim is similar to that of the earlier work: there is a reaching out from literature to cross the ground of social criticism.

The Critical Path is a peculiar book, conceived in part as a popular defense of culture (in the respectable line of Aldous Huxley and Bertrand Russell), and yet loaded down with theoretical baggage, weighty speculation about the ontology of literature. So that two quite different approaches inhabit the same text, with results that are not altogether

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happy. Indeed, Frye apologizes for this awkwardness right at the start, calling his book "a farce, in the etymological sense: a fifty minute lecture stuffed with its own implications until it swelled into the present monograph." Those implications cling like barnacles to a barely discernible hulk of argument, obscuring what they intend to reveal.

The argument, in its social aspect, seeks to persuade us of the importance of tolerance and individual freedom—the twin values, always imperiled in one way or another, around which any civilized life revolves. Old stuff, but true enough. The disposition which leads us to favor these values is termed the myth of freedom. The disposition which leads us to set the community against the individual is termed the myth of concern. (In the true academic spirit, Frye needs his own terminology before he can get under way.)

The two myths are complementary, but the myth of concern tends to be the more aggressive in its claims, and so it is necessary to alter the balance toward the myth of freedom. From the myth of concern we get propaganda; from the myth of freedom, poetry.

Mention of poetry brings us to the straightforward literary section of the book, where Frye examines the traditional view of poetic *sanctity* identified with the names of Sidney, Milton and Shelley. The notion of the poet as seer—serving a higher world of the imagination—must not, Frye insists, allow us to think of the poetic function as exclusive, where the thing excluded is society. On the contrary, it is the merging of freedom and concern that produces the social context of literature. Again, this is an eminently healthy position, though not really in the nature of revelation.

Such is the paraphrasable content of *The Critical Path*. Some of the implications are: that McLuhan's global village is an ersatz community, "the latest of the illusions of progress" (cf. also *The Modern Century*); that the prediction of a leap out of print culture is absurdly reductive, and wrong; that we are, however, receiving a new impetus toward oral literature from young people; that (surprise!) Marxism has succeeded Christianity in the domain of Belief.

In certain moods, Frye seems to enjoy speaking about social phenomena with the mental equipment of a literary critic. The tone adopted at such moments is at once ironical and precious, and it can grow quite unnerving. During the People's Park crisis at Berkeley, which Frye witnessed,

> a vacant lot with a fence around it became assimilated to the archetype of the expulsion from Eden, dramatizing the conflict of the democratic community and the oligarchical conspiracy in a pastoral mode related to some common conventions of the Western story. A student editorial informed us that the lot was "covered with blood" because, like all the rest of the land in North America, it had been stolen from the Indians (murder of Abel archetype). The expelling angels in this symbolism were (as in Blake's version of it) demonic, and the police, with their helmets and bayonets and gas masks, were endeavoring, with considerable success, to represent the demonic in its popular science fiction form, of robots or bug-eyed monsters from outer space.

Deep Frye, as the joke goes. Yet even this example of misplaced wit shows Frye going through his characteristic paces, and the faculty here so inappropriate to what it confronts is employed elsewhere to better effect.

Frye's *manner* of thought is completely original, diagrammatic in a superior way. Everything falls into a pattern and becomes part of the central myth: with Frye, this kind of ingenuity shades into genius. The disadvantage, of course, is that the clarity of outline is bought at the expense of detail—prompting Frank Kermode's smart comment, "when you hear talk of archetypes, reach for your reality principle." Certainly, *The Critical Path* comes under that objection: it is an ungainly book stuffed with the particular flaws of its author. It has, also, the considerable force of his virtues, among which may be counted an immense learning gracefully used, an excellent prose style, and the sanity of a good liberal without quotation marks. □

Notes from the Russian Front

THE MEMOIRS OF MARSHAL ZHUKOV. *By Marshal G. K. Zhukov. Illustrated. Delacorte Press. 703 pp. $15.*

ROBERT E. WALTERS
Mr. Walters has taught mathematics at the Naval Academy and Bennington College. His book, Geopolitics in the West, *is being issued shortly by Penguin in England.*

Of the various theatres of operations in that titanic struggle which we call the Second World War but which the Russians call the Great Patriotic War, it was undoubtedly the Russian Front which was the most decisive and produced the bloodiest battles. Despite the efforts of Hollywood to alter the facts, and our general unwillingness to admit the truth, there was nothing in the West to compare with the struggles at Stalingrad or Leningrad. It is important to admit that; Maj. Gen. J.F.C. Fuller observed that truth is courage intellectualized.

But on the contrary, the British estimate of the situation has been accepted by the United States, an estimate that reflects a basic feeling of inferiority. There is no need for this. Even when Britain was fighting alone, it was nonetheless, as Sir Herbert Richmond noted, engaged in fighting on three fronts—the Home Front, the Mediterranean Front, and the Ocean Front. Somehow, supported by the widely accepted theories of Mackinder, the belief has arisen that fighting on the sea is inferior to fighting on land. This has led to the idea, accepted curiously enough even by a Naval War College professor, that the British sea-power system was a bluff. Britain always needed allies on the Continent. It had not the manpower for a great army and a large navy, and the error of the British in World War II was to allow ideological prejudice to prevent the formation of a Grand Alliance. In the end this did occur, but under circumstances less favorable to Britain.

Hence, it was destined that the great battles occur on the Eastern Front. Indeed, by the time the Allies had first landed in Europe the Germans had lost far more men on the Russian Front than the Allies put into battle. The Western efforts looked minor in comparison. Churchill was one of the few to admit openly that it was the Red Army which administered the first defeat to the hitherto invincible Wehrmacht—and so produced another legend, extending to the present day, that the Russian Army cannot be beaten. Beyond a doubt the ablest Russian general was Zhukov, whose memoirs have now been translated into English.

There is a great similarity and, at the same time, a vast difference beween these memoirs and those published by Western military leaders such as Eisenhower, Montgomery, Bradley, et al. Military men the world over think alike in many ways. They tend to be conservative and support the regime or Establishment in power. Interestingly enough, Zhukov admonishes the Russian youth for their apparent indifference to the war. "When one talks about this to young people today, one doesn't get much enthusiastic response." Many of the remarks made by Zhukov could well have been—indeed have been—made by West-

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ern leaders. In this respect there is a professional mirror-image.

But there is a significant difference, too. Somehow Zhukov does not give one the impression of the stereotype which we in the West have of the military man. His photographs in uniform suggest a jovial bus conductor rather than a Field Marshal. There is no question of his ability and his ruthlessness in dealing with subordinates during his campaigns. Yet, his pudgy Slavic face refuses to take on the classic military mask. He had been accused repeatedly of Bonapartism, but he was easily shunted aside both by Stalin and Khrushchev.

Robert Payne, in his biography of Mao Tse-tung, noted that since Mao was a scholar, and not a soldier, he would always be able to defeat the professional. There is a great deal of truth in this observation. The military machine needs at the top someone who has the necessary independence of mind to know when to disregard the rules. Zhukov is not wholly of this type, but he is near to it. He is of peasant origin and, had the old system maintained itself, he would never have attained the rank of marshal. There is a tacit assumption that the political Right, because it is always talking about military affairs, produces the best generals. The truth seems to be the exact opposite. Brooks Adams, in *The Law of Civilization and Decay,* observed that the parliamentary armies of Cromwell completely outclassed those of Charles. "The difference between the royal and parliamentary armies was as great as though they had been recruited from different races. Charles had not a single officer of merit, while it is doubtful if any force had ever been better led than the troops organized by Cromwell."

In keeping with his origins, Zhukov was not blinded by traditional prejudices. He served an apprenticeship as a furrier in Moscow before World War I. Drafted into the elite cavalry, he showed leadership ability and was sent off to a noncommissioned officers' school. He did not become emotionally attached to the cavalry. "We realized that the future largely belonged to armor and to mechanized units." Zhukov elected to side with the Red forces during the revolution. He remained in the army and gradually rose in rank. Zhukov is naturally quiet about the skeletons in the closet—there is nothing about the great purge of military leaders, or the Finnish campaign, for example.

The bulk of the book, which ends with the close of World War II, is naturally concerned with this struggle. It is interesting to note that the Moscow campaign produced the greatest impression upon Zhukov. This is not surprising since before this battle, though fighting desperately, the Russians had not been able to halt the Nazi war machine. The Russian counteroffensive upon the flanks of the German drive for Moscow shook the Wehrmacht to the core. Even the German generals admitted that the conditions—the moral conditions—were near to producing a panic-stricken rout.

According to Harrison Salisbury, "Zhukov's way of fighting a battle—and it may have been a way dictated as much by necessity as design—was to let the enemy extend himself until the last moment of the German offensive momentum, and then to grind the Nazis down in terribly bloody exchanges as they drove in for their objectives." Zhukov concentrated on hitting at the flanks and in this he was aided by Hitler's predilection, especially in the latter stages of the war, for aiming his blows at obvious objectives. He forgot that one important aspect of the blitzkrieg strategy is to use the inherent mobility of the internal combustion engine along the line of the indirect approach—so that the enemy cannot easily guess your objective. Sherman used this idea in his famous march through Georgia. It was used earlier in World War II by the Germans, and by U.S. forces in the Pacific when strongly fortified Japanese-held islands were allowed to wither on the vine.

The Battle of Stalingrad was a natural one for Zhukov's strategy; numbers of German generals had warned that the flanks were dangerously held by Axis satellite forces. But the central aspect of Zhukov's account seems to be the duel between Stalin and Hitler. And in this Zhukov provides some insights into Stalin's method of working. In comparison, at least, it appears that the Soviet leader was more open to criticism than Hitler. Dictators, like generals, are not by nature modest men. Stalin seemed able to learn from his mistakes—though he would not admit that they were his. He refused to commit all of his reserves to Stalingrad. Isaac Deutscher quotes Stalin as telling Vassilevsky: "No matter how they cry and complain, don't promise them any reserves. Don't give them a single battalion from the Moscow front."

Zhukov, although first-rate in many ways, does not appear to have been a particularly brilliant leader. We in the West, especially in the United States, have the tendency to go from one extreme to another in our estimate of the trends of the time. One need only recall the predictions of James Burnham. Prior to the German invasion, and in the first stages, the belief was widely accepted in the West, including our military experts in Washington, that the Russians would easily succumb to the German Army. When the tide turned the other way, then it was tacitly accepted that the Red Army was invincible. There is a theory prevalent now that had the Russian Revolution never occurred, Russia would be as far advanced economically as it is today. This theory neglects completely World War II—or rather it tacitly assumes that Russia, no matter what regime was in power, would have been able to defeat the German invaders. However, the truth of the matter is that that defeat was by no means certain even with the Soviets in power. The basis for this assumption is the Mackinder heartland theory which serves as the foundation for Western military doctrine today. But there is no indication that anyone of importance in Russia accepts this theory of the invincibility of the heartland, i.e., of Russia and Siberia; however, its naive acceptance by the West is undoubtedly useful to the Russians.

And now that Russia has begun to move onto the seas, a theory has been advanced that the Russians are trying to make a synthesis of the ideas of Mackinder and Admiral Mahan. Such a preposterous idea is contradicted by the fact that the Russians have not accepted Mackinder. Montgomery, in his *History of Warfare,* says in his characteristic grandiose manner that *his* first principle of warfare is "Don't march on Moscow." But reading the literature of World War II, including the present work by Zhukov, it seems that as a matter of fact Hitler came within a hair of achieving his goal. He had a low opinion of the Slavs. Like the proverbial American tourist who judges the worth of the country by the plumbing facilities, Hitler believed that all that was necessary was to kick in the door, and the whole structure would crumble. H. Stuart Hughes, in a remark made several years ago on a visit to Russia, noted that in that country when things have to work they do work. The regime early decided that tanks would be the decisive weapon and Russian tanks were without a doubt the best in the world.

Isaac Deutscher pointed out the absurdity of the belief still current in the West that the Russians could easily sweep through Western Europe. First, there was the matter of the tremendous Russian casualties sustained in World War II. Then there is little proof that the Russians have ever shown the same understanding of the blitzkrieg which the Germans demonstrated in the early stages of the war. The Zhukov

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papers demonstrate that in the latter stages, when the power went over to the defense, it was the superior weight of Russia, together with colossal errors on Hitler's part, which enabled the Russians finally to destroy the Nazi war machine.

There is also a natural tendency in the West to overrate the significance of the aid given to Russia during the war. Zhukov observes, "Western bourgeois political and military leaders allege that the Soviet Army was able to achieve its superiority in matériel owing to Anglo-American assistance." If this concept were really accepted, then it would tend to argue against the possibility of the Red Army pushing into Western Europe, since they have now been denied that assistance. Zhukov flatly denies the premise: "This is far from true." He explains, "I do not wish completely to deny its value, though, as in some degree it did help the Soviet Army . . ." and then goes on to denigrate that value. The truth lies somewhere in between—which seems to be the moral of the Zhukov memoirs. □

Man With a Leaf in His Head

THE TESTING-TREE. *By Stanley Kunitz. Atlantic-Little Brown. 67 pp. $4.95.*

STANLEY MOSS
Mr. Moss is a poet. His most recent book is The Wrong Angel (*Macmillan*).

In his *Selected Poems,* published in 1958, Stanley Kunitz gave us some dozen poems that are likely to guide people guided by poetry, as long as English is read. He has "suffered the twentieth century," confronted tragic experience, given it form—in the course of the poems, triumphed over it. Now we have thirty additional poems. I have spent a month with *The Testing-Tree* in my pocket or within reach, blessed and tortured by its artistry. The new book brings a new open style; complications have been made apparently simple. When passionless, open simplicity is the crab grass of our literature, Kunitz's poems often begin with the naked truth. The new style faces that exacting passion.

In *The Testing-Tree* Kunitz's language ruthlessly prods the wounds of his life. His primordial curse is the suicide of his father before his birth. The poems take us into the sacred woods and houses of his 66 years, illuminate the images that have haunted him. Yet nowhere in the fiber of this book is there a thread of malice, anger, hatred, envy, pique; not a sneer, not a "sidelong pickerel smile," nor does Kunitz turn the other cheek. What he has managed is to turn the "conscience kind." In a time when literature seems to edge us toward suicide, or lead us into hell, Kunitz stands with Roethke on "the terrible threshold" and says, "I dance for the joy of surviving."

Call *The Testing-Tree* an ocean, take a stand along the shore, and a wave of change or counterchange will send you sprawling. But caution be damned. It is not Kunitz's sense of personal measure that leads: it is hallucination, apparition, that draws him and the reader to a state beyond reason.

Drawn deep into the underground of selfhood, Kunitz must "find, create in the past in order to become fully alive in the present." Is there another poet so haunted by the unknown? In a letter, referring to himself as a character in *The Divine Comedy,* Dante wrote: " '. . . . he saw certain things which he who thence descends cannot relate'; and he tells the reason, saying 'that the intellect is so engulfed' in the very thing for which it longs, . . . 'that memory cannot follow.' " I believe this is the territory Kunitz has staked out for himself. Where it is God for whom Dante longed, Kunitz, by some process for which the poem itself is the verb, searches for secret reality and the meaning of the unknown father. He moves from the known to the unknown to the unknowable—not necessarily in that order.

Kunitz's poetry keeps a watchful eye on the 20th century. Of the thirty poems in *The Testing-Tree,* twelve clearly show a mind "engaged in history," and may be read as "parables for our time." History enters a number of poems where ideally and lifelessly it might have been excluded—for example, in the gentlest of love poems for his daughter. Nothing Kunitz has ever written in any way touching on history contradicts the findings of "Night Letter" among the *Selected Poems*: that history, no matter how dreadful or dreary, is a history of the human heart. He is among a bare handful of poets we have who can think in poetry.

In an essay Kunitz makes this central statement: "The hard and inescapable phenomenon to be faced is that we are living and dying at once. My commitment is to report the dialogue." The Kunitz dialogue, an explosion of opposites conceiving knowledge, is the molten core of the book. Out of this fire Kunitz has pulled a wonderful variety of forms. Here is Kunitz, for example, moving as life does from the comical-ridiculous to the tragic within the course of two lines:

That coathanger neatly whisked your coat
right off your back. Soon it will want your skin.

He has said, with a salute to Gerard Manley Hopkins, that he prefers a poem steeped in the "taste of self." Often, Kunitz's self and his "I" are used in separate ways. The "I" poems usually deal with temporal material; he is the speaker and he tells of events that actually happened. The song he says he sang when his child was ill we are certain he sang; the FBI really called; the number and kind of trees he planted are as stated. Kunitz's diggings are never in the fiefdoms of American regionalism. He pursues his own living and dying.

Then there is another self, his persona. As this self, he may appear as a prophet gardener, a Pacific salmon, a Lutheran minister who plotted to assassinate Hitler, a Jew in the desert. The poet is partly observer, partly the thing observed. He must be true to himself and, at the same time, he must speak within the confine of what the imagined or actual character might say, feel and do. As this self, he deals with aging, dying, moral and spiritual survival. He reaches to become something "beyond the merely human"—he prepares to die.

In "The King of the River," the major poem on aging and dying, Kunitz's dialogue appears in its purest form:

The great clock of your life
is slowing down,
and the small clocks run wild.
For this were you born.

Among the useful notes in the back of the book, one on this poem reminds us of the two-week period in the life of the Pacific salmon during which it leaves the ocean, swims up river in full strength and beauty, spawns, turns old and colorless, and dies. The phenomenon is studied by geriatric medicine because the same process in the human takes twenty to forty years. Such concentration of living and dying offers ideal raw matter. (A similar concentration occurs in the poem around the hanged anti-Nazi pastor, thanks to the time structure provided by the S.S.) Here is the opening of "King of the River":

If the water were clear enough,
if the water were still,
but the water is not clear,
the water is not still,
you would see yourself,
slipped out of your skin,
nosing upstream,

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slapping, thrashing,
tumbling
over the rocks
till you paint them
with your belly's blood:
Finned Ego
yard of muscle that coils,
uncoils.

Who peers into the water sees not himself, or the water in himself, but a self slipped out of its skin into a conditional world of the imagination. Much of the poem is written in the conditional mood. The word "I" never appears except late in the poem when the wind speaks. It is not by chance that "Finned Ego" is capitalized. Something of the great "I Am" must dart through the reader's mind. The poem aches for the unknowable, the unattainable. Rhythm and counter-rhythm and silence add to the meaning of argument and counter-argument. The "King of the River" is a dialogue, the method Socratic. Each passage—I hesitate to use the word stanza—with its unique rhythms, actions and stops, is a "question," answered by the closing lines of the poem. Here are the opening lines of the four sections:

If the water were clear enough,
if the water were still . . .

If the knowledge were given you, . . .

If the power were granted you
to break out of your cells, . . .

If the heart were pure enough, . . .

In fact, the "questions" are not questions but conditional statements; truth and language coil and uncoil simultaneously. Within the syntax of the poem, self and nature join and become something more lasting, if not holy.

In the closing passage of "King of the River" and "Around Pastor Bonhoeffer" a common action occurs. The self, the actor in each poem, has come to the "threshold of the last mystery," . . . "at the brute absolute hour" the dying-living being is turned back to face his origins, "the salt kingdom," the world. The Extermination Camp section of "Bonhoeffer" closes with these lines:

Oh but he knew the Hangman!
Only a few steps more
And he would enter the arcanum
where the Master
would take him by the shoulder,
as He does at each encounter,
and turn him round
to face his brothers in the world.

As I see it, the final instruction is that at death man must face his fellow men, judge them and in turn be morally and spiritually judged. There is something Talmudic about it. Basic to the Jewish concept of atonement is the position that if you wrong a man, only he can forgive you, not God. (If you wrong God, you must ask forgiveness from him.) Kunitz has given us some of the great religious poems of our century. He is so personal in his spiritual attention (I struck out devotion) that to discuss his religion seems more of an affront than a service. He sees himself as a stranger. The sense of exile, which runs through the grain of his work, is a poet's exile, but it is also a Jew's. In "An Old Cracked Tune," after the street song, Kunitz puts it like this:

My name is Solomon Levi,
the desert is my home,
my mother's breast was thorny,
and father I had none.

The sands whispered, "Be separate,"
the stones taught me, "Be hard."
I dance for the joy of surviving,
on the edge of the road.

There is no major American poet so free of place names as Kunitz. In "The Mound Builders," in apparent contradiction, he travels through various places in the South, but he stops at Macon, Ga., where he quickly digs through the mounds of seven civilizations.

In an early poem he told us:

If I must build a church,
Though I do not really want one,
Let it be in the wilderness
Out of nothing but nail-holes.

Some poets have taken nature as a teacher. Frost saw it as indifferent, Melville as malignant. Thoreau, who certainly tried harder than most to be intimate with nature, had to admit:

I still must seek the friend
Who does with nature blend,
Who is the person in her mask,
He is the man I ask . . .

As a boy Kunitz threw his stones against "the indefatigable oak, tyrant and target," in a battle for "Love, poetry and for eternal life." We know the man in the poems has planted 10,000 trees. He is at peace with nature:

I held a fantail of squirming roots
that kissed the palm of my dirty hand,
as if in reply to a bird.

Kunitz, now in his mid-60s, has found his way. His self, poetry and nature are worked with as one consubstantive stuff. This accomplishment, so simply presented in "King of the River" and "The Mulch," should occasion a national holiday. He has become a mulch, a protector locked into nature. He is "a man with a leaf in his head." The leaf is both growing and memorized. □

The Plausible and the Wacky

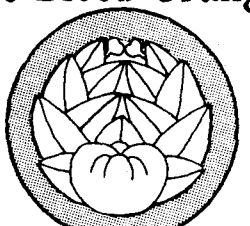
THE FEAR OF CONSPIRACY: Images of Un-American Subversion from the Revolution to the Present. *Edited by David Brion Davis. Cornell University Press. 369 pp. $10.*

THE SLAVE POWER CONSPIRACY & THE PARANOID STYLE. *By David Brion Davis. Louisiana State University Press. 86 pp. $4.50.*

LEO P. RIBUFFO
Mr. Ribuffo teaches American Studies at Yale University.

A common quip these days is that "even paranoids have enemies," and while we must not infer too much from a *bon mot* scrawled on subway walls, the line appropriately suggests the changing attitude toward a certain frame of mind. Until recently it has seemed obvious that the balanced members of society should look with skepticism (and suspicion) on those unbalanced souls who were unduly suspicious. This notion fitted nicely with our propensity to explain obnoxious social behavior in terms of psychological disorder. Called upon to defend our assertions that cops or Communists or hippies were "sick," we could say that they were "paranoid" and sound scientific.

These attitudes received indirect support from scholars who, with varying sophistication, invoked the rhetoric of mental health to interpret political belief. No one used this technique more brilliantly than the late Richard Hofstadter, whose influential essay, "The Paranoid Style in American Politics," is partially reprinted in *The Fear of Conspiracy*. When he coined the phrase "paranoid style" in 1963, Hofstadter was not using the term in a clinical sense. Rather, he was trying to evoke "the qualities of heated exaggeration, suspiciousness, and

The Blood Oranges

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conspiratorial fantasy" which seemed an "all but ineradicable" part of the American political tradition. "Somewhat more rational and much more disinterested" than the medically diagnosed psychotic, the paranoid stylist perceived a hostile world directed, not at himself, but against "a *nation, a culture, a way of life.*" Unlike his "normal" brethren, who knew that secret cabals *sometimes* hatched plots, he regarded giant conspiracies "as *the motive force* in historical events." Although the political "paranoid" liked to bolster his arguments with facts and footnotes, he didn't evaluate evidence as the rest of us do; he always made "a curious leap of imagination . . . at some critical point in the recital of events."

Hofstadter recognized that his formulations were laden with value judgments. The phrase "paranoid style" sounded pejorative, and it was meant to sound that way. Convinced that the style had a "greater affinity for bad causes than for good," he advised that its use could alert us to "distorted" thinking. He surmised that obsessions with conspiracy, at least in the United States, had been "the preferred style only of minority movements." Furthermore, without explicitly denying the existence of liberal "paranoia," Hofstadter usually illustrated his theory with examples—often paired—from the Left and the Right. Recent versions of the style could be found, he wrote, "in the popular left-wing press, in the contemporary American right wing, and on both sides of the race controversy . . . among White Citizens' Councils and Black Muslims."

In the acknowledgments of one book and in the title of another, David Brion Davis generously notes a great intellectual debt to Hofstadter. Nevertheless, these two volumes are read most profitably by considering how they differ from the classic essay on political neurosis. Davis is more subtle than Hofstadter, and much more willing to understand, even to empathize with his countersubversives. The table of contents in *The Fear of Conspiracy* immediately indicates a divergence between the two historians.

To be sure, this important collection of sources contains contributions by some figures whom, following Hofstadter, we have come to associate with the "paranoid style." There are Federalists, convinced that "the same spirit and some of the identical agents" behind the French Revolution were undermining the United States; Anti-Masons, lamenting that the Masonic Order held courts and legislatures in a "lion's grip"; members of the American Protective Association, accusing the national government of "connivance" with the Catholic hierarchy, and Birchers, ascribing President Kennedy's assassination to leftist plotters, or explaining, as does Robert Welch, that America's policy in Vietnam is "conducted according to Communist plans and wishes." One meets again the father-son team of Jedidiah and Samuel F. B. Morse, both certain that America had "in truth secret enemies," while disagreeing as to who precisely they were. The modern "radical Right" is amply represented. In addition to Welch and Revilo P. Oliver from the Birch Society, one may read the advice of Henry Ford on the "international Jews"; of Charles Coughlin on the "plutocracy" behind the World Court; of the apostate Communist, Louis Budenz, on the continuing menace of his former peers, and of Elizabeth Dilling on FDR's "Red Record."

Moving, loosely speaking, from Right to Left, the reader encounters the abolitionist, William Goodell, asserting that "not a single administration" of the federal government was "free from the controlling interests of slavery." Free-silver advocates saw their opponents as "a conspiracy of foreign capitalists," and Populist Mary Lease condemned Grover Cleveland as "the agent of Jewish bankers and British gold." Davis includes selections from Earl Browder and William Z. Foster who argued respectively, that a united "camp of reaction" was leading the United States toward fascism; and that "monopoly capitalists" concealed the true origins of the Korean War. Charging that "a 'white power structure' as monolithic as Europe's colonial offices" has deliberately preserved "institutional racism," Stokely Carmichael and Charles Hamilton round out the company of left-wing countersubversives.

But Davis does not stop there. Unlike Hofstadter, he stresses that "crusades against subversion have never been the monopoly of a single social class or ideology." Indeed, these revivals have been "appropriated by highly diverse groups." He proves the point by offering selections from some heroes as well as from the historical villains. George Washington is "as fully convinced" as he is of his own existence, "that there has been a regular, systematic plan formed to enforce" England's repressive acts against the colonies. Richard T. Ely, praised in textbooks as a progressive economist, perceives Socialist plotters lurking in the 19th-century factories, and compares them (unfavorably) to Frank and Jesse James.

Even Abraham Lincoln, Davis says, believed that the Dred Scott decision was part of a sly scheme to extend slavery; unfortunately, except for a brief epigraph, we get no chance to follow his argument. A later President, however, is fully clad in the armor of one of his righteous causes. Theodore Roosevelt, lauded by some scholars as a realist, detects "the Hun within our gates" on the eve of World War I. He complains that Woodrow Wilson, of all people, permitted "thousands of allies of Berlin to sow the seeds of treason and sedition." It's too bad, he laments, that these "sham philanthropists and sinister agitators," including Sen. Robert LaFollette, couldn't be sent to Germany where they belonged.

Davis' intimation that the "paranoid style" frequently affects middle-of-the-roaders as well as "extremists" is significant. Yet this insight is less important than his explicit reconsideration of just what is "normality," political and otherwise. These two themes, of course, are closely related. If we learn nothing else from modern psychiatry, Davis insists, we should at least "be aware of the infinite gradations between 'normal' and 'abnormal' behavior." Consequently, while preparing *The Fear of Conspiracy*, he consciously resisted the temptation to compile an anthology "from the lunatic fringe" which would permit "the reader (and editor) to assume a superior stance." Furthermore, Davis cautions against supposing that "the fear of subversion is always generated by internal psychological needs." Although every society probably contains "certain personality types" prone "to blame disrupting change on secret, diabolical forces," even the more eccentric characters in this collection were responding to the pressures of "highly disturbing events." Their observations, though sometimes "wild distortions of reality, were not necessarily unreasonable interpretations of available information."

The author's laudable hesitation "about making pejorative judgments or drawing sharp distinctions between normal and abnormal fantasies" also informs *The Slave Power Conspiracy*. Because Davis can here develop his ideas, instead of squeezing them into headnotes and chapter prefaces, this shorter book is richer in insight and more theoretically sophisticated than is the anthology. Both the abolitionists who perceived a "slavoc-

DAWN

Heat, and whirr of insects.

With night still in our mouths
we are fatally innocent,

rocked through dark in the body of earth,

lulled
by her sustained agony
and the breadth of her coma.

Marilyn Thompson

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racy" controlling the government, and the Southern planters who sensed Yankee agitators among their bondsmen, are shrewdly placed in social and intellectual context. The "unprecedented fluidity and growth" of antebellum America bred a "sharp increase in confusion of social roles," a perplexity represented at diverse cultural levels by "a virtual obsession with hoaxes, imposters, frauds, confidence men, and double identities."

Adapting Erving Goffman's ideas about interaction ritual, Davis proposes that conjuring forth images of "expansive, subversive" forces was one way to express "individual and communal anxieties over being duped and slipping behind." By joining "ostensibly authentic" campaigns against subversion, from Anti-Masonry to the American Party, citizens found "at least temporary escape from the uncertainties of role playing." In a sense, the slave power controversy was merely the "culmination of earlier countersubversion movements." The rival sectional rhetorics were indebted not only to the pervasive mood of suspicion but also to a legacy of images from the Revolutionary period. After the slavery dispute intensified in the 1850s, both sides increasingly used countersubversive themes to shore up "communal values," and to arrive at "sharper regional—and hopefully national—self-definition."

At the close of both books, Davis reveals his own mixed feelings about the "paranoid style." "One could argue," he writes, "that hypotheses of conspiracy are not so different from other theoretical constructs that give an explanatory framework to discrete facts of experience." One could even maintain that these theories have "played a positive role" in American history. Anti-Masonry, after all, spread democratic ideals, and the abolitionists did alert the nation to the abuses of slavery. Observing, however, that "genuine conspiracies" have rarely been as dangerous as the crusades against them, Davis shares some of Hofstadter's feeling that a "paranoid style" of presentation often signals "distorted" thinking. Acceptance of "paranoid" notions, moreover, "leads inevitably to overreaction." Believing that we can no longer afford the domestic and international liabilities latent in this overreaction, Davis criticizes recent countersubversives more sharply than he does the 19th-century variety.

Davis' final verdict against conspiratorial doctrines, empathetic though it is, entices him to seek easy points against some of his subjects. He notes, for example, that while Charles Beard's attack on Franklin Roosevelt's foreign policy "carried overtones of right-wing isolationism," it "curiously anticipated the New Left of the 1960s." Calling attention to "a remarkable continuity in the themes, values, and expectations of countersubversion," Davis discerns "an incredible stroke of irony" in Robert Welch's resurrection of the Federalist charge that Adam Wieshaupt's Illuminati engineered the French Revolution and ultimately spawned modern communism.

On closer examination, these ironies aren't particularly ironic. Since much of the New Left's historiography descends from the avowedly Beardian pen of William Appleman Williams, the old historian's anticipation isn't curious at all. Nor is Welch's retrospective indictment of the Illuminati any stranger than the Democratic Party's annual dinners in honor of Jefferson and Jackson, gentlemen whose relationship to the New Deal and the Great Society is problematical. Most of us create "usable pasts"; we can't expect the Right to forsake such a potent ideological instrument. To consider another irony, Welch may be closer to the mark in this case than Davis, who dismisses the Illuminati as "a short-lived organization" dedicated to Enlightenment principles. E. J. Hobsbawm holds, on the contrary, that the organization did in fact create a "succession of secret brotherhoods." Moreover, perhaps because he too is seeking a usable past, Hobsbawm contends that from 1789 to 1848 these and related clandestine revolutionary groups were "by far the most important organization[s] for changing society."

Although Davis' ambivalence about the "paranoid style" allows occasional lapses into recrimination, one must sympathize with his divided mind. His books are markedly affected by the unsettled tenor of contemporary America. During times of "conflict and uncertainty," like the Civil War period and the late 1960s, he writes, the "line narrows between respectable ideology . . . and the ravings of screwballs and nuts." The "apocalyptic" temper derided by Hofstadter now seems more instructive than he realized. And the growing popularity of R. D. Laing and Thomas Szasz, who passionately reject the conventional wisdom about "mental illness," indicates that the pro-paranoid graffiti have serious intellectual parallels. As a historian, Davis brings to the issue of psychological deviance a perspective which these two psychiatrists slight. Having underscored the "infinite gradations" between "normality" and "abnormality," he knows that we still must decide—at least if we are to work in the world—which theoretical constructs are useful and which social programs are responsible.

That determination is more difficult to make than one might think. Readers of these two books may begin to feel that one fellow's "curious leap of imagination" is another's solid reasoning, and vice versa. To cite a controversial instance, not only do I consider Beard's strictures against FDR not curious; I think that they contain more than the grain of truth which Davis and Hofstadter grant to "paranoid" formulations. With the Tonkin Gulf resolution in mind, we may want to reconsider the merits of what Samuel Eliot Morison dourly called "history through a beard." If Roosevelt's procedures were accepted as valid precedents "in law and morals," Beard warned, then the President may

> obtain from Congress a law conferring upon him in elusive language the authority which Congress has no constitutional power to delegate to him. . . . [And] after securing such legislation, publicly announce that he will pursue, as previously professed, a policy contrary to war and yet at the same time secretly prepare plans for waging an undeclared "shooting war" that are in flat contradiction to his public pronouncements.

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We must admit that many of our most cherished axioms rest (to tear William James's phrase from context) on our "will to believe." Because I am even more hesitant than Davis about drawing the line between "normality" and "abnormality," I would stress how much that disposition is socially influenced. "Rational" professors who reject William Appleman Williams' history as too "conspiratorial," will speak confidently about the Mafia's growing power—on the basis of no firmer evidence than Lyman Beecher had about the Catholic Church. Millions of Americans belong to what Peter Berger calls "cognitive minorities"; from Seventh Day Adventists to Scientologists, their perceptions of the world, not just their attitudes toward it, differ from "ours." Crudely put, the conspiracy theory you prefer depends on whom you hang around with.

In his essay, Hofstadter declared that explanations in the "paranoid style" were "far more coherent than the real world." Yet Davis' predecessors who interpreted conspiratorial language as *ipso facto* proof of faulty thinking (if not "sickness") may have endorsed an excessively amorphous picture of the "real world." C. Wright Mills astutely observed that those participants in "the new American celebration" who claimed that "events, not men, shape big decisions" were yielding to a modern-dress version of "history as Fortune, Chance, Fate, or the work of the Unseen Hand." "In our time," Mills dissented, "the pivotal moment does occur" when "small circles decide or fail to decide." As citizens, picking and choosing among theoretical constructs, trying to separate the plausible from the wacky, we might find that some unfashionable "paranoid" suspicion about those in power is a good thing after all. As historians and social scientists, we must look more closely at the complex interrelation between society and personality. An uncritical acceptance of R. D. Laing's "politics of experience" will be no more enlightening (though perhaps more exciting) than the sloppy adaptations of *The Authoritarian Personality* once in vogue. Professor Davis' two humane books already make important contributions to this effort. It's good to know that even "paranoids" have friends. □

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MUSIC

DAVID HAMILTON

To open the new fall season, the New York City Opera revived last fall's production of Janácek's *The Makropoulos Affair*, and it is a pleasure to report that this remains one of the most successful operatic productions of recent years: thoroughly studied by an excellent cast, imaginatively and fluidly conceived by Frank Corsaro, and spearheaded by the vocal and dramatic virtuosity of Maralin Niska as the protagonist in Karel Capek's drama of a 16th-century girl who lives into the 20th century by virtue of a magic potion.

It is ironically appropriate that the first extensive use of film projections as operatic "scenery" in New York should occur in a Czech opera, since the pioneer of such techniques in opera was the Czech designer Josef Svoboda, but Corsaro's special combination of characteristically detailed dramatic realism with cinematic flashback and close-up techniques function with uncommon relevance to this particular opera; the elaborately costumed film scenes (in color) make a dramatically apposite fourth dimension in time to the contemporary (i.e., 1913) setting of the main action.

The role of Elena Makropoulos is a gift for a good actress: like Tosca, she is a famous prima donna, and is offered such extra opportunities as a drunk scene and a final transfiguration in which Janácek's cunningly skimpy music finally expands into something like an extended lyrical texture. The handsome Miss Niska plays every opportunity to the hilt, and sounds even better than she did last year, with an absolute security and focus of pitch and line that put to shame the work of most of her more celebrated colleagues. As I said last year, this is the performance of a lifetime.

Only in one respect does this revival concede a degree of quality to the original. In the earlier acts, Walter Susskind lets the pacing run rather slack by comparison with the taut work of Gabor Oetvos last year. Janácek's approach to operatic composition in his later works is curious, for the music functions less as structure than as sheer continuity. For most of the evening, the orchestra deals in fragments, most of them apparently derived from the speech rhythms of the original Czech text, creating a variety of surface characters without, as far as one can discern, any more profound function (there is some primitive use of motivic symbolism, but hardly any developmental treatment of the motives). Only in the final scene does the music expand in a more or less conventional fashion, complete with a "big tune"—a carefully prepared effect that certainly comes off in this performance, thanks to the always careful coordination of stage action with musical character. Fortunately, Susskind is quite comfortable in this final episode.

It would not be difficult to think of at least a dozen contemporary operas that surpass this one in both reach and grasp; unfortunately, none of them has been offered in New York with such comprehensive expertise. One can but hope that the vision and skill applied by the City Opera to *The Makropoulos Affair* may now be turned to even better use; in the meantime, this production is strongly recommended, both for its own values and as an example of the standards that we should expect of a 20th-century staging of a 20th-century opera. □

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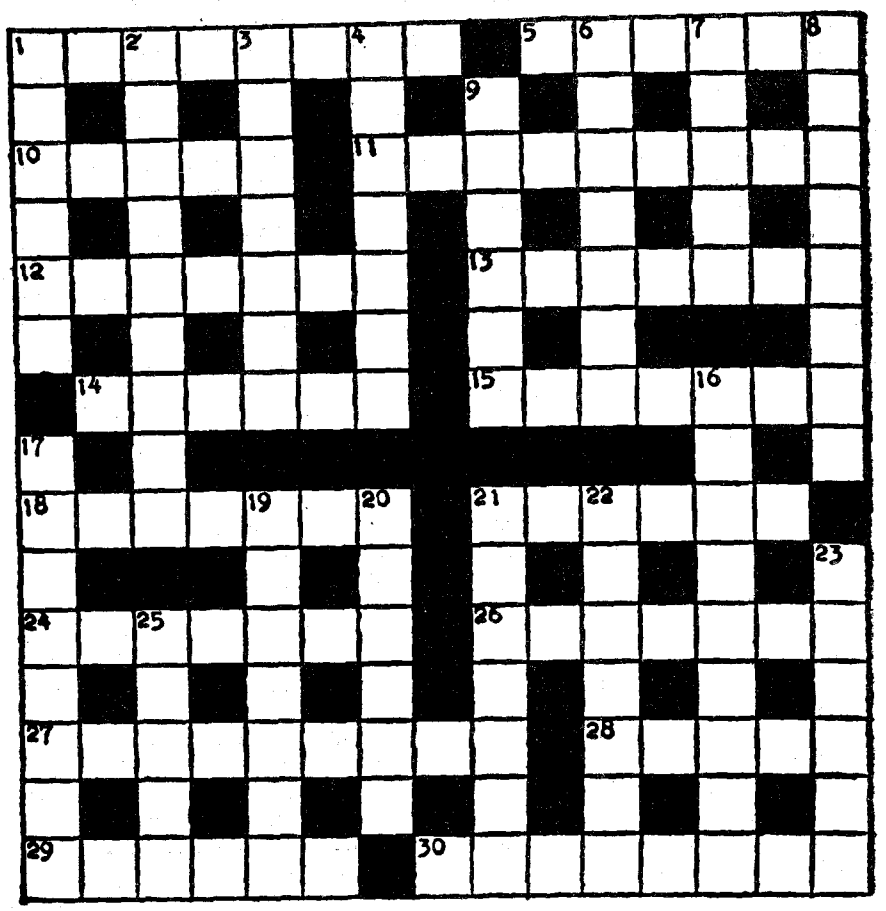
Crossword Puzzle No. 1408

FRANK W. LEWIS



ACROSS

1 Falsely minted up in brazen style. (8)
5 Guided around a tree, tied up and beaten. (6)
10 Beat out of broth. (5)
11 A financial street journal on the surface may have some pattern. (9)
12 He defended popular rights, proving more than a paper official! (7)
13 Proved enticing, and demure indeed! (7)
14 Skill with one having chariot-driving experience should make a good king. (6)
15 and 17 down One chamber has the decisive role with it. (7,8)
18 See 21 across
21 and 18 It implies a dark chamber should be used for sketching and exhibition purposes. (6,7)
24 From which the lessons are read. (7)
26 Wearing a kimono dictates you'll have a homophonic style. (7)
27 Not one of the more wild ways of a Mongol conqueror. (9)
28 A mark of one of the wagon drawers. (5)
29 British grounds for broken hearts. (6)
30 Such a fluctuation in rate gets most enormous. (8)

DOWN

1 In the whole, where to look for quality in Dorothy's dog. (2,4)
2 Tries rope weaving for curtains? (9)
3 One who comes out with a cry to emerge into the open country? (7)
4 See 7 down
6 In the scalp, a case of finding hairy animals. (7)
7 and 4 down When they traditionally ring in, some people make such a call (5,3,4)
8 Sort of ridged around in what might be rallying. (8)
9 The uplift movement may be essential to such craft. (6)
16 Let a little sunshine in. (9)
17 See 15 across
19 How one might find a way of obtaining a run the hard way. (7)
20 The 4 is such an event. (6)
21 Equal. (7)
22 It's just a small detail. (7)
23 Does it give stress to current money? (6)
25 Promising one for the arrival? (5)

SOLUTION TO PUZZLE NO. 1407

ACROSS: 9 Upstage; 10 Residue; 11 Treaty; 12 Polymers; 14 Teethes; 15 Dusts; 17 Doubt; 19 Emerson; 21 Scholars; 23 Berlin; 25 Warpath; 26 Alabama; 27 Advantageously. DOWN: 1 Countered; 2 Nascent; 3 Heartbeat; 4 Mien; 5 Tarbooshes; 6 Essay; 7 Badgers; 8 Fess; 13 and 1 across Oh Dear, What Can the Matter Be; 15 Desperados; 16 Secondary; 18 Ushered; 20 Nilgais; 21 Sows; 22 Llama; 24 Gang.

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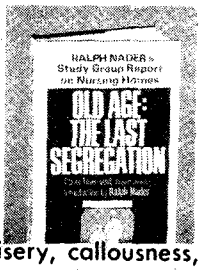

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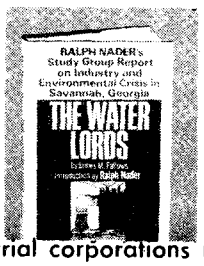

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